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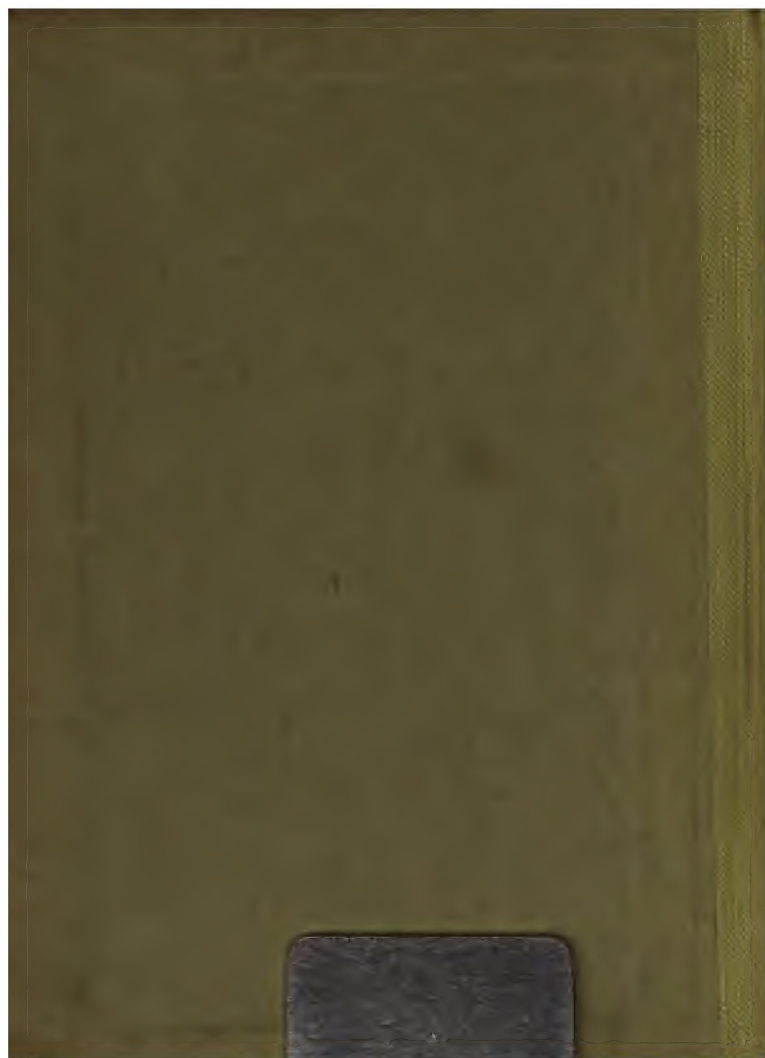
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# THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

I

## ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY

BY

A STUDENT

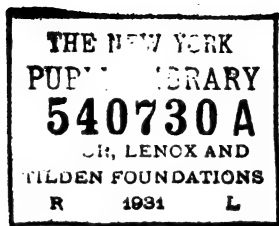
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## PREFACE

**T**HE remarks under this head are intended to be introductory to each of the Manuals.

First, as to the spirit in which they are offered. These Manuals are not written in a controversial spirit, nor as an addition to the stock of theories awaiting public approval. The writers have no time to waste in arguing with people who do not wish to be convinced, or who ridicule everything which is new to their limited outlook. Their message is for those who desire to know — those who are seeking for something that will solve their doubts and remove their difficulties. For such, all that is needed is a clear exposition of the Theosophical teachings; for they will judge of the truth of a teaching by its power to answer the questions they ask. People realize, much more now than in the early days of the Theosophical Society, the



value of Theosophy; for the ever-increasing difficulties engendered by selfishness and materialism, by doubt and the multiplicity of theories, have created an urgent demand which it alone can satisfy.

Again, it is necessary to state clearly and emphatically the genuine teachings of Theosophy, as given by the Founder of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, and her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley. For, as H. P. Blavatsky predicted, there are persons who have sought to pervert these teachings and turn them into a source of profit to themselves and their own selfish and ambitious schemes. The true teachings do not lend themselves to such purposes; their ideals are of the purest and most unselfish. Hence these persons have sought to promulgate under the name of Theosophy a perverted form of the teachings, from which Brotherliness and other pure motives are omitted, and which contains doctrines which H. P. Blavatsky showed to be maleficent and destructive. As these pseudo-Theosophists have gained a certain amount of notoriety by using the names of the Theosophical So-

ciety and its Leaders, it is necessary to warn the public against them and their misrepresentations. Their teachings can easily be shown, by comparison, to be directly contrary to those of H. P. Blavatsky, whom they nevertheless profess to follow. Instead of having for their basis self-sacrifice, self-purification, and the elevation of the human race, these teachings too often pander to ambition, vanity, and curiosity. In many cases they are altogether ridiculous, and only calculated to make people laugh. Nevertheless, as these travesties have served to discredit the name of Theosophy and to keep earnest inquirers away from the truth, it is well that the public should know their nature and origin. They are the work of people who were at one time members of the Theosophical Society, but who did not find in it that food for their own personalities of which they were really in search. So they turned against their teachers in wounded pride and vanity and started little societies of their own — with themselves at the head.

The writers of these Manuals have no personal grievance against any such calumnia-

tors. Inspired by a profound love of the sublime teachings of Theosophy, they have made it their life-work to bring within the reach of as many people as possible the benefits which they have thereby received. And they feel that they will have the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the public in exposing folly and bringing the truth to light.

Theosophy strikes unfamiliar ground in modern civilization, because it does not come under any particular one of the familiar headings of Religion, Science, Philosophy, etc., into which our age has divided its speculative activities. It dates back to a period in the history of mankind when such distinctions did not exist, when there was one Gnosis or Knowledge embracing all. Religion and Science, as we have them to-day, are but imperfect growths springing from the remnants of that great ancient system, the Wisdom-Religion, which included all that we now know as religion and science, and much more. Hence Theosophy will not appeal to the same motives as religion and science. It will not offer any cheap and easy salvation or put a premium upon

mental inactivity and spiritual selfishness. Neither can it accommodate itself to the rules laid down by various schools of modern thought as to what constitutes proof and what does not. But it can and does appeal to the Reason. The truth of doctrines such as Theosophy maintains, can only be estimated by their ability to solve problems and by their harmony with other truths which we know to be true. But in addition to this we have the testimony of the ages, which has been too long neglected by modern scholarship, but which is now being revealed by archaeologists and scholars, as H. P. Blavatsky prophesied that it would in this century.

It may perhaps be as well also to remind those who would criticise, that the state of modern opinion is scarcely such as to warrant anybody in assuming the attitude of a judge. It would be quite proper for a Theosophist, instead of answering questions or attempting to give proofs, to demand that his questioners should first state their own case, and to be himself the questioner. The result would certainly show that Theosophy, to say the very least, stands on an equal footing

with any other view, since there is no certain knowledge, no satisfying explanation, to be found anywhere.

Since the days when the wave of materialism swept over the world, obliterating the traces of the ancient Wisdom-Religion and replacing it by theological dogmatism, our religions have had nothing to offer us in the way of a philosophical explanation of the laws of Being as revealed in Man and in Nature. Instead we have only had bare statements and dogmatic assertions. The higher nature of man is represented by such vague words as Spirit and Soul, which have little or no meaning for the majority. The laws of the universe are briefly summed up under the term 'God,' and all further consideration of them shut off. Then came a reaction against the dogmatism of religion, and man pinned his faith to knowledge gained by study and reflexion, limiting his researches however to the outer world as presented by the senses, and fearing to trench upon the ground which dogmatic theology had rendered the field of so much contention. The result of this has been that neither in reli-

gions nor the sciences, have we any definite teaching about the higher nature of man or the deeper mysteries of the universe. This is a field which is left entirely unexplored, or is at best the subject of tentative and unguided conjectures.

Therefore until religious teachers have something definite, consistent, and satisfactory to offer, and until science can give us something better than mere confessions of nescience or actual denials with regard to everything beyond its own domain, Theosophy can afford to assume the rôle of questioner rather than that of the questioned, and does not *owe* anybody any explanations whatever. It is sufficient to state its tenets and let them vindicate themselves by their greater reasonableness; and any further explanation that may be offered is offered rather from good will than from any obligation.

Theosophy undertakes to explain that which other systems leave unexplained, and is, on its own special ground, without a competitor. It can issue a challenge to theology, science, and other modern systems, to surpass it in giving a

rational explanation of the facts of life.

Again, there are some questions which it is beyond the reach of the human mind, in *its present stage of development*, to answer; and it would scarcely be just to arraign Theosophy for not answering these.

Judgment should in all cases be preceded by careful study. There are always those who will impatiently rush to questions which a further study would have rendered unnecessary; and it is safe to say that the majority of 'objections' raised to Theosophical teachings are such as could have been solved by the objector himself, had he been a genuine student. In the ordinary courses of education, students are required, and are content, to accept provisionally many of the teachers' statements, in full confidence that further study will explain what in the beginning cannot be made clear. In the same spirit an earnest student of Theosophy will be wise enough to hold many of his difficulties in reserve, until, by further investigation, he has gained better acquaintance with his subject. In the case of those who are not willing to adopt these wise and patient

methods of study, it may be reasonably questioned whether they are the more anxious to learn or to disprove.

Above all it is sought to make these Manuals such that they shall appeal to the heart and not *merely* to the head; that they shall be of practical service to the reader in the problems of his daily life, and not mere intellectual exercises. For there have been in past days books written by persons more distinguished for a certain grade of mental nimbleness than for heartfelt devotion to the cause of Truth; and these have appealed only to those people who love intricate philosophical problems better than practical work. But as H. P. Blavatsky so frequently urged, the message of Theosophy is for suffering humanity; and the great Teachers, whose sole purpose is to bring to mankind the Light of Truth and the saving grace of real Brotherhood can have no interest in catering for the mental curiosity of merely a few well-to-do individuals. Even soulless men, said H. P. Blavatsky, can be brilliantly intellectual; but for those who are in earnest in their desire to reach the higher life, intellectual fire-



works alone will have little attraction. We intend, therefore, to keep the practical aspect of the teachings always to the front, and to show, as far as possible, that they are what they claim to be — the gospel of a new hope and salvation for humanity.

These Booklets are not all the product of a single pen, but are written by different Students at the International Headquarters of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY at Point Loma, California. Each writer has contributed his own quota to the series.

For further explanations on Theosophy generally, the reader is referred to the other Manuals of this series, which treat of Theosophy and the various Theosophical teachings, and to those works listed in the Book-List of Standard Theosophical Literature for sale by The Theosophical Publishing Co., Point Loma, California.

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# I

## ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY

EVERY one knows that the great religions of the world *differ* from each other; and also that in respect to the path of life in which they tell men to walk, they *resemble* each other. They present also many other resemblances and identities.

It has not yet occurred to our scholars that there may be one great religion of which all these are parts.

Nations have always differed in their characteristics, the difference being sometimes due to the region in which they dwelt, sometimes to other causes. One people would be imaginative, another philosophical, another simple; one pastoral, another nomadic; one peaceful, another active and warlike; one dwells amid smiling plains, another by the rock-ribbed sea.

## *ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY*

If we were to tell some story of science, say about atoms and molecules, to the classes of a school, we should not use the same language to the little children as to the elders. To every class we should tell the story differently. If we were wise we should illustrate it from the games and stories that the children already knew. To the very little ones we might make the atoms talk and play, and so we might teach chemistry in the guise of a fairy-tale. To the boys that were older we might picture the atoms as marbles and balls; to artistic children we might dwell most on the colors and sounds resulting from the movements and groupings of atoms and molecules. And to the higher classes we should begin to introduce some of the abstruse mathematics which are concerned in these questions. We might put the case so differently to the highest and lowest classes that anyone who heard us talking to both might not guess that we were talking about the same things, yet we should be; and if the children, on going home, tried to tell their

## *ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY*

parents in their own words what they had heard, the unlikeness would become still greater, for they would be adding and leaving out.

The word Theosophy is a blend of two Greek words. Together they mean divine wisdom, and also wisdom concerning divine things. There is a similar Sanskrit compound, *Brahmavidyâ*, properly meaning the same things.

Theosophy itself is that complete story of the world and man, of which a part has been told to every people, a part suited to their needs and development and peculiarities, and told in language appropriate to their understanding. However simply it had to be told, there were always some among every people whose comprehension ran beyond that of their fellows, and who had prepared themselves to follow the path of life more steadfastly. To such, more was told. And so we find everywhere this fact of two doctrines, one for the multitude and one for the few — the latter, for certain reasons men-

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tioned elsewhere, always told under pledge of secrecy. Jesus Christ, for example, said that to the multitude he spoke in simple parables — like the fairy-stories of our illustration; but that to the elect he spoke fully the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven — like the abstruse mathematics of our illustration.

Some time in the near future, scholars will be compelled by the force of their own facts to recognise the common container and source of the world's great religions. Their researches would immediately be easier and more fruitful if they would but take its existence as a hypothesis only. Prosecuting their studies in its light they would soon be rewarded by seeing emerge from the confusion the majestic outlines of the religion-philosophy now known as Theosophy. But those who wish to understand it need not wait till then, nor need they proceed by that method.

## II

### WHO IS THE MAN?

THE first question answered by Theosophy, a question upon which all else depends, is: *Who am I?* If the answer: *You are yourself*, seems silly, that is only at first glance.

Nearly every one thinks of himself as identical with the body. Is this the case? If it is, any talk about the soul, or immortality, is necessarily absurd.

We use the body, command it, work with it and train it, all as we will. With it we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell, employing each sense just as we choose. It is obviously an *instrument* at our disposal, a wonderfully complicated tool.

Can it then be the man? Can a player be identical with his instrument, a carpenter with his hammer? Yet we habitually blind ourselves to the difference by saying, *I am*



## *ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY*

ill, or growing old, forgetting that so far as we know it is the body only, not the man, which is subject to these changes.

If then the man, the soul, is not identical with the body, it will be natural to ask what becomes of him when, as we say, he is unconscious, or asleep, or dead; when in old age his memory is gone, his mind childish once more, his limbs stiff or paralysed? Surely we must admit that in these cases the man himself must have changed.

From this point of view it does look as if the man and his body were one and the same, since he seems to change with its changes. Let us go a step or two further and then come back.

All the waking hours we are conscious of a stream of thoughts. We cannot stop the stream, but we can generally direct it where we will. We can cause our thought to occupy itself with whatever we choose. We can stop thinking of any one thing and think of any other. It is not always easy, for the mind seems to be a living thing with wishes

## *WHO IS THE MAN?*

of its own; but it is always quite possible.

So for two reasons it seems clear that the mind is not the man. First, because like a restive horse it often opposes the wishes of its owner; and secondly, because the man can, if he uses will enough, turn it where he will, as a carpenter turns a chisel. Yet again we must ask, What becomes of the man when his mind becomes delirious in fever or childish in old age?

Then there are the feelings, emotions. These too go on all day. We are by turns happy or miserable, hopeful or despairing, irritated or calm, compassionate or resentful. But these too we can control, especially if we have practised doing so. We can refuse to be miserable or ruffled; we can compel ourselves to be hopeful, compassionate, considerate. Feelings also have a life and persistency of their own and may object to being controlled. But as we can control them with practice, it seems that they also cannot be the man.

Having thus noted that mind and emotion

## **ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY**

are, or ought to be, both under control of the man, the soul, through his will, we note next that there is a limit to this control. Both need a healthy body for their perfect health, and if the body is fevered or very old, mind and feeling are likely to be dim and feeble, or even quite distorted, despite every effort of the will. We have no warrant for saying that the *man* necessarily varies with variations in his body; but we must say that to a very great extent the mind and emotions do. So far as they do not, it is because they are sustained and guided by the will.

This leads to the next point. However ill or old the body may be, however unresponsive to the man's will, and however dimmed may be the mind and feelings, the will itself and the man who uses it may be quite unchanged. We sometimes see that up to the very moment of death the man may be using his will in its full strength. The results may be small; the stiffening lips may refuse to utter more than a few words, perhaps of love and encouragement to those about; but

## WHO IS THE MAN?

it is evident that whatever else is dying, the man and the will are not. Even at the very moment of death the eye may still be speaking its message. The man, the soul, and its will, are passing on in full consciousness. And the last gleam *we* get of that consciousness is often one of unchanged, unlessened love for those remaining behind.

So we have arrived at some answer to our question: *What, or who, am I?* Let us call 'I' the soul, and read our answer thus: The soul, the I, the self, is that conscious power which dwells, during life in the body, amidst the bodily feelings, amidst the emotions, capable of dominating them; using the mind and capable of dominating it; having for its instrument of control the will. So far as we can see, neither the soul, nor its will, nor its degree of love for those it leaves behind, are necessarily affected by illness or by death.

### III

#### BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

**I**F we now turn to Paul's description of man as a compound of body, soul, and spirit, we can more easily understand what he meant.

By *soul* he seems to have meant the same as we do — the *man* himself with his will and power of choice; by *body*, not only the casement of flesh, but all the impulses arising from the lower, passional nature, which tend to pull the man downward; and by *spirit*, the divine part.

The body — made up of millions of little living cells congregated into various organs, which should all work harmoniously together — is an animal, the highest of all the animals. It is the highest because of the development of its brain; and because of that it is a fit tenement for the soul, the man him-

## *BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT*

self. Thus the soul contacts in the body the highest sort of matter-life. In order that it may do so, that it may have that experience, is one of the reasons why, according to Theosophy, it enters the body and shares the body's life from birth to death.

In order to understand its entry, let us imagine a countryman suddenly set down for the first time in the midst of a thronging city. People are hurrying in every direction; there are a thousand sounds at once — voices, the feet of horses, the roar of vehicles. Accustomed to the quiet of the country, the man would be dazed by so much activity; he would hardly know himself. His usual current of thoughts would be broken up. It would seem to him as if he would never find his way through the maze of streets. Altogether it would be a sort of new birth for him, the confused beginning of a new life.

In the eyes of a new-born infant we can sometimes see signs of a similar bewilderment. The soul is just then beginning to enter the little body. The body is alive with

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the intense life of all its millions of active cells and organs. Besides all the growth and activity that is going on in the body itself, the senses are opening and stirring and bringing in all the new sights and sounds of the outer world. Is it not natural that in all this rush of new experiences, the soul should forget itself and the world it has just left?

To return to the illustration. After a while, beginning to understand his new surroundings, the man would begin to take pleasure in them and be absorbed in them. Laying aside all his old country habits and thoughts, he would enter thoroughly into the new life of the city. He would become accommodated to its ways and dive into the rushing stream of its business and activities. His nature might seem to change altogether, and in a few years he might have lost all trace and almost all memory of having lived the quiet life of the country.

Thus it is with the soul. During the first few years of its new life, after the first confusion has worn away, it becomes thorough-

## *BODY SOUL AND SPIRIT*

ly absorbed in the life of the body. Its pleasures are those of the body; its aims are mostly to get more of these pleasures; its thoughts and feelings are all occupied with the world of which its body is a part. It thinks of the body as itself and of itself as the body. The higher life it had before birth is quite forgotten. As it grows older into manhood or womanhood and the strain of our modern competitive life begins to be felt, its absorption into the world becomes completer. All its ambitions may be directed to getting things for the body's comfort and luxury. Its forgetfulness of the other life may be so complete as to lead to disbelief in it altogether, to materialism. At best, the memory of the other life is so vague that there are no details, no clear picture. It is so vague that we do not know that it is memory and call it faith. Hence for a reason which the man cannot give to himself, but which is really this faith-memory, he accepts the accounts of the higher life which some one of the various religious creeds gives him.



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But curiously enough, though all the creeds speak of the soul *entering* a higher life after death, some of them say nothing of the soul *leaving* the same higher life at birth.

We can see now why the body (meaning thereby the lower, passional nature) is sometimes spoken of as the enemy of the soul. It tends to drown the soul's memories, the soul's knowledge of itself. It often paralyses the will, substituting for the will some passion of its own — for example, to get money or position. Such people are really slaves, not masters; though they only know their slavery when they try to free themselves, when they try to use their will to conquer the master passion.

We must remember that though the body is an animal, it is an animal which has become humanized through the presence of a human soul in its midst. The soul lights up in it a higher intelligence than it could ever have gotten as a simple animal. And so it has thoughts and aims which are not possible to any of the simpler creatures below

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man. If the soul yields to it constantly, never asserting its will, letting itself be carried upon every wind of passion, the man may reach a point at which he gives not a single sign of being a soul at all. Some of these people are mere sensualists, the utter slaves of some degrading passion. But they may be highly intelligent, cruel, selfish and ambitious, without the slightest care for the welfare of any other person. The animal has won the battle of that life, and after death the soul's key to its own proper world is too rusty for use.

It is by resisting passions, by resisting selfishness and cultivating compassion and brotherliness, by constant aspirations, and by trying to live the life of the higher nature, that the soul comes while in the body to a knowledge of itself and its immortality.

## IV

### THE PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE

**W**HY, then, if entry into the body means so much loss to the soul, even if only temporary, does it come there at all?

The answer given by Theosophy is, that it may gain higher life, and that it may give higher life. It is divine, but it has to recognise that while in the flesh; and there is always a fuller divinity possible to the very highest man.

Theosophy sees life everywhere; nowhere anything dead. It may at once be asked, Is not a human body dead when the soul has left it for another world?

If we had eyes that could see, we should find that the body was as much alive as ever, but with a different kind of life. The little busy souls of the millions of cells, which, while the man was present, served him,

## *THE PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE*

left the body with him, or very soon after. Their place is taken by throngs of lower lives, germs, in their way just as busy. Part of each cell goes to form their minute living bodies; the rest separates into molecules of water, various gases, and salts. But the molecules too are alive. They behave like a drill corps when the sergeant dismisses it. The men no longer make a corps, and each goes his own way. One will perhaps join a party going swimming; another may go to a music class. When the bath and the class are over, the men again separate and group together in new combinations. At the end of the day they may seem just the same as at the beginning, but as a matter of fact they are not; each has profited a little by the drill, the music, and the swim.

So with the living particles of Nature's vast life, the particles that we call molecules of water, air, salt, iron, and so on. They pass from one combination to another, sometimes forming part of a plant, sometimes of an animal, sometimes of a human body, the

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ocean, or a stone. Age after age they are awakening to fuller consciousness, learning, even though we might not notice any change if we watched them for ages.

What are they learning? *The power to combine into higher groups.* Science knows that from the birth of our planet until now, life has been rising. The orders and species have been progressing to higher forms. This was because the molecules were learning how to combine. At last they could combine and recombine so as to make the body of man; and then man, the soul, came and dwelt among them. It was at last a fit tabernacle.

So, however completely at death the molecules scatter, they can now always be brought together again to make a human form. What Nature has been teaching them is the power to combine into higher and more perfectly harmonious forms, forms of which all the parts work together to a higher end.

And that very same thing she is teaching man. Man, according to Theosophy, reincarnates again and again on earth, living life

## *THE PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE*

after life, not one only. We are grouped again and again in all kinds of ways. Among savages there are small groups, the family and the tribe. Tribes make nations; nations disappear, and others come up on to the stage of history. A nation is like a body; the various groups, made of men who follow various occupations, who are joined for various ends, or who live together in towns and cities, are the organs of the body. Each man is a separate cell. Men leave one nation at death and perhaps enter another, making part of all sorts of families and groups as they go along.

What we are slowly learning is the power to hold together, the power to work for each other and for the whole of which we are a part, whether a guild, a family, a city, or a nation; the power of divine comradeship of men and groups and nations to make one vast harmonious organization, the body of humanity. Then a further avenue of progress leading to heights we cannot conceive of, will be open before us.

## ELEMENTARY THEOSOPHY

Behind us are the animals, moving manward, getting the human touch age after age, to be the humanity that shall follow us when we have learned our lesson and gone on — perhaps to another planet, the 'child' of this one, says Theosophy. Behind them are the plants, some of them — like the sensitive plant for instance — already showing the tendency upward to the animal.

So we can see that we are in the body for several purposes.

First, that in it and through it we may touch Nature, and learn the wise use of her forces.

Second, that we may teach, and help Nature in *her* teaching. Among the cells, the little lives, of our bodies we are like a master in his class. In controlling our impulses, in resisting deeds that make for moral and physical disease, in living in every way the highest and purest life we can, we are training the lower lives that clothe us on the one hand; and training ourselves on the other. In training his boys, the master

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trains himself. And whilst they learn from him, he learns much from them.

Thirdly, we are here that we may learn brotherhood, the higher comradeship — that quality which, spreading all over the earth, will one day open a new door to us, leading to a height of happiness and power that has always been the ideal before the eyes of humanity's helpers and Teachers.



## V

### REINCARNATION

**I**N a preceding chapter we have considered incarnation. It now remains to say a little about *re-incarnation*.

Is one life enough to learn all that there is to do and to learn on earth? Are we perfect characters? Have we made life on earth all it might be, learned to live in harmony with each other, developed all the faculties possible to us, learned all about the life of the matter of which the planet is composed? If not, does it not seem likely that the causes which brought us here once may bring us again, and again, until we have done these things? Law and inclination will work together and supplement each other. For those who die hating, there is the Law that they shall return in order to learn to love. Those who die loving, will wish to return to

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those they love. Would one who loves all humanity and pities it in its pains and struggles onward, willingly leave it forever while he knew there was help he could render?

What right have we earned to some other heaven while we have not made this life the heaven it might be? Nearly all of us have done injuries and given pain at some time. If we consider that, should we not wish to come again to pour at least as much good into the stream of human life as we poured evil; to meet those that we once pained, and by loving deed take away the pain — even if time should have covered it over and hidden the wound? Sudden unexplained impulses to do kind actions to people we have never met (in this life) before, may sometimes be unconscious desire to pay some debt of old unkindness.

Nor are we without other suggestions of having lived before. Some people we seem to recognise at once, liking or disliking, as we say, by instinct. May it not be the

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mere *resuming* of an old like or dislike? In that sense it is a real memory of a past life, though all details are forgotten.

We have many more of such memories, memories that in such cases are forces, not details. We are born with marked characters, tastes, aptitudes, powers, in this or that direction. Where did we get them? Where did the infant Mozart learn music? Is it heredity? But how, when these things have no counterpart in the parents? They are surely a species of memory. Clearer memory we have not because we have not the old brain. The brain, the *first* fact-storer, is new. The soul, the real and *final* fact-storer, has its memory overlaid by the throng of impressions and sensations that life and the living body bring. At death we have often heard—and Theosophy teaches—that every detail of the closing or closed life comes up from the brain before the gaze of the departing soul. It registers in its own memory all that are of value to it and they become eternal. But at its birth it does not fill the new

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brain with them. The tablets of the brain are wanted for other things. It merely brings into the brain and body the general effect, some general memories, as we have noted.

When we have grown stronger in life, when birth does *not* bring bewilderment, when we shall have learned not to be the prey of the body but its strong and quiet master, then we shall have also learned to bring back to our own attention, at need, whatever clear memories of the past will be useful. But so far, the presence of such detailed memories would be confusing and painful, diverting our attention from more important work. Whatever we acquired in the last life, of unselfishness, of will, of power of concentration, of power of thought and observation, of power of self-control — that we bring undiminished for use in this life; and it is enough. Anything more, if in part useful, would have its usefulness outweighed by its painfulness and confusion. We should be tempted to dwell with bygone

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memories instead of with present duties.

It will be natural to say: Have I then to be an infant and an old man again and again, with childish faculties and pleasure in the one case, and fading faculties and second childishness in the other?

Are we entitled to promotion to another lesson till we have learned well the one in hand? We have not yet learned to be an infant properly, or an old man or woman properly. These are lessons of life still unlearned. The soul of each of us has yet to learn, at and after birth, to stand apart from the infant body in which it will incarnate; and, while watching and protecting and guiding and developing that, to keep up its own work and self-conscious being. For the soul has work of its own. As the infant body and mind pass to childhood and manhood, the soul will consciously blend itself with them more and more; until at last, still holding itself as a soul, it will have wholly incarnated. But at present it cannot do that in the case of ordinary humanity. As it de-

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taches itself from its own world, from its 'Father in Secret,' it loses itself in the body and passional nature. With most of us it remains almost lost till death again frees it, without ever having recognised itself as a soul.

But when we have learned infancy, we shall find one of our joys in overshadowing and training the young life with which in due course we shall blend our soul-life to make the perfect man; and in helping the vivid little lives that make up the infant body, to move a step onward in their progress. Those that enter and compose the body later are less plastic.

And so with old age. We have not learned it. There should be no loss of faculty; the mind should become deeper and wiser with the gathering years. Certainly faculties whose use applies mainly to the earlier years and the life-work of middle manhood, will be voluntarily left in disuse to make way for others, just as when a man becomes the head of a business he spends no more time in

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bookkeeping or typewriting. He attends to higher matters.

Life should of course be spiritual all through, but old age should be specially so. Genius and wisdom should go on ripening to the very end. (Genius belongs of course to the spiritual nature, and the word spiritual is here used throughout in a sense much wider than the ordinary: it applies to all of man's highest faculties.) A clearer vision of truth is more possible to old age which follows a life well-lived than to the years when physical activities run high.

At last comes a moment when the body as a whole is worn out; the lives that compose it have to return to Nature to be re-energized. Without disease, without failure of any special organ in advance of any of the rest, the body should be laid aside. Death in that ideal form will be without pain, perfectly peaceful, rapid, and not attended by any break in the consciousness of the soul.

And in due course the soul will begin once more to give its attention to birth. No more

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than death, will birth mean any break in the thread of consciousness. Gradually the soul will pour all its acquired wisdom and thought-stores into the new brain and proceed with its growth and work absolutely unhindered.

However, this ideal program, which we have to realize and which will mean such rapid growth, is not achieved yet; we have much to learn. Nevertheless now, if we give our bodies right exercise daily, and if we keep a spiritual ideal of conduct and thought always in view, we need fear neither old age nor death. The one will not mean second childhood, nor the other any wrench of pain.



## VI

### KARMA

**A** MAN'S DEEDS COME BACK TO HIM; THAT WHICH A MAN SOWS, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP; CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS AND IT SHALL COME BACK AFTER MANY DAYS,— are three sayings which contain a law belonging as sister to the law of Reincarnation. To Theosophists it is known as *Karma*. The punishment aspect of it the Greeks called *Nemesis*; but that is only half of it.

It belongs to the law of Reincarnation because there is not time in any one life for all the deeds a man does therein to come back to him. They come back to him because they are his.

Whenever we do anything at all, purposefully, we do three things, though we ordinarily think of one only. Consider, for exam-

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ple, theft. (a) The thing visibly done is the taking of some one else's property. (b) Invisibly, a change of character for the worse is made; this shows itself in the fact that whatever is done once is easier to do the second time. (c) The third thing, also invisible, is that the world's atmosphere, in which we all share, in which our minds live as our bodies live in the common air, is poisoned. An evil wave has been sent into it. This wave, in however slight degree, does act on and affect the minds of all other men. The world is hard enough, cold enough, selfish enough, as it is; this wave worsens it. By it the minds of men become, in however slight degree, more suspicious, more grasping, harder. They feel, though without noticing it, an increase in what we might call the thief element. Of course the wave sent out by one single act of theft is very slight; but when we multiply it by millions every year, we can understand why the world is as it is. Each of the millions has broken the harmony that should have been — the harmony between

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men in act and thought, which must some time come about.

A whole life may be spent in undetected and unpunished theft. *But it was all registered*; the successive acts were written deeper and deeper on the man's character, and they sent successive waves into the world's atmosphere. To that atmosphere which he helped to make, with that character which he entirely made, the man comes back. The echo of his own past deeds returns to him, finding an exactly answering echo in his nature. All the world tendencies, the effects of all the deeds ever done by man, come flooding in upon him, as they do on all of us. Some find *no* echo in his character — he may, for example, have no tendency to murder. He will be tempted only by those that *do* have their echo in his character.

All is now ready for the opportunity. When that comes, what will happen? What is likely to happen? He falls under the load of impulse he built into himself.

The 'luck' of not being found out (if it can

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be called luck), which he enjoyed before, fails some time or other — perhaps on the very first occasion. Then there is a calamity, disgrace, by which he may learn to reform; or many such calamities may be necessary, extending perhaps over more than one life. They go on happening until at last he is strong enough to receive out of the world's atmosphere his own current, find its echo in his own nature, *and yet refuse to yield*. When there is no longer that echo, the battle is finally won there. The man has fought and neutralized that much evil; he has cleared the world's atmosphere of that much of the stain which he made in his thefts.

This is one aspect of the law of Karma, the coming back of evil deeds. The law cannot 'forgive' anything, for that would be to leave our character still weak. True forgiveness is done by man himself when he turns so strongly to his higher nature that he becomes at one with it. After that he can face the echoes of his own deeds without fear; they find no answer in his own nature.

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There are many other aspects, for Karma is really an explanation of life. Good deeds come back as certainly as bad ones. He who does a good deed sweetens the world's atmosphere and his own character. The current comes back as an urge to repeat them, finds an echo in his character, and goes back to others with the benediction of some new good deed. The world is bettered, its burdens eased a little. The man has the inner joy and peace of harmony with his divine nature; just as, by the other kind of action, he has unrest within and without. Ill deeds bring inner unrest and outer pain; good deeds, inner peace and outer harmony. With both hands this law helps us on to our greater destiny, to the real life to come.

But Karma goes even deeper; it is called into action by hidden tendencies of character, whether good or bad. We shall understand if we remember that its aim is to develop, to restore us to our proper and highest nature. It meets our weaknesses with tonics, and tonics are sometimes bitter. Wiser

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eyes than those of ordinary men are needed to follow its work in individual cases; but the general principles are easy enough for a child to grasp. Some men meet seemingly unmerited disgrace. Where is the justice of it? Others close their lives in the prolonged pain of some slow malady. Where is justice here? In man's own former thoughts and deeds. It is Nature's response to character.

We must try to take Nature's long view if we would understand her work in its beneficence. In such cases as we have supposed, there must be a failure somewhere needing correction, some flaw in character needing strengthening. Some characters only bring forth their finest flower after great pain. The pain is transient, the flower eternal; and it was the flower that Nature wanted to secure. Perhaps there was a latent love of others' good opinion, which, uncured, remained a weakness and might have led on to all kinds of evil, hypocrisy, ambition, vanity. The weed is now uprooted. But in the last life it may have been very luxuriant — leading, it

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may be, to some marked sin or crime. Karma carried that over to the next page of her ledger, the next life. But the possibilities in details are endless.

Physical pain, again, often calls forth the most magnificent endurance, strengthening the will in some cases as nothing else can. In such a case it could be crudely described as punishment for the lack of endurance and patience; or, more correctly, as a difficult bit of nature's beneficent training. A good deal of the work of Karma is to call our attention to failings of which we were before unconscious, and to give us the opportunity to correct them.

So the Theosophist sees in the workings of Karma a law which is *wholly* beneficent, which 'punishes' and 'rewards' for one sole purpose — the evocation of the Soul. It works behind and through every event of our lives. Nor are its ways inscrutable. If we watched all that happened to us from day to day and from year to year; if we noted what duties came up to be done, what pains and

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pleasures came into our path, what accidents befell us; if we watched instead of complaining — we should find that at every turn we were being offered opportunity for growth of will, of mind, of character. If outer life is monotonous, there is the opportunity to light up the outer life with the radiance of the inner life, with the companionship of the divine. If outer life is painful, it is the opportunity to develop will and endurance. And if we stop the fierce wish to escape pain and procure pleasure, putting that much force into compassionate deed and thought, we should find our minds growing steadily clearer in comprehension of this law and its purpose. There are no accidents. *Whatever happens we have ourselves brought about in this or some other life.* We have done, or left undone, and the effects of both constitute our environment and the stream of events.

Our deeds of yesterday are the parents of the events of today, and events are the mask of opportunity. They press on us from without, as our divine will does from within



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— both in the same direction. Karma waits at our side and when we have acted or not acted, she adjusts the effect so as to teach and train us. We have freewill; the future is absolutely in our hands. Karma, if we so choose, will show us her face as friend; there is always inner peace for those who walk with her. She is always the friend of those who make themselves the friends of humanity, who develop every faculty and talent and strength of their nature, that they may serve humanity the better.

## VII

### THE SEVEN IN MAN AND NATURE

WHEN, as children, we begin our study of science, we are told that matter exists in three states — solid, liquid and gaseous. That does very well as a first step. In the same way the student of Theosophy will begin by Paul's division of human nature into body, soul and spirit.

But in both cases, as soon as we come close to the subject, we find that the *three* will not do, will not carry us far beyond the threshold of our study. Human nature and nature without are alike *seven*-fold; the number seven runs across the pattern in every direction. Science knows of many sevens, but she has not yet learned to regard seven as a sort of abstract map by means of which she could walk much faster in every field of investigation. For ages Theosophy

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has known it to be one of the keys to which the universe is tuned. Let us study it first in the nature which is outside us.

The finest particles of ordinary matter are called molecules. Sometimes these fly free from each other; that we call the *gaseous* state of matter.

But short of that entire freedom there is the *liquid* state, where the molecules move readily around each other, but remain in closer contact.

And thirdly, there is the *solid* state. But of this there are two divisions, the *crystalline* and the *colloid* or gelatinous. And again, of the colloid there are two conditions, *living* and *not living*. The flesh of man and animals and the growing tissues of plants are composed of living colloid.

In all these states matter is molecular, exists as molecules. But under certain conditions the molecules break up into the still smaller particles called atoms. We then have atomic matter, said to constitute one of the sets of 'rays' emitted by radium.

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And again, the atoms themselves may break up into the still finer particles called corpuscles or electrons. These constitute still another set of 'rays.'

So from *this* point of view the seven states of matter are:

- |           |     |                       |
|-----------|-----|-----------------------|
|           | (1) | Corpuscular*          |
|           | (2) | Atomic                |
| Molecular | {   | (3) Gaseous           |
|           |     | (4) Liquid            |
|           |     | (5) Living Colloid    |
|           |     | (6) Inanimate Colloid |
|           |     | (7) Crystalline       |

But the seven runs across nature in another way. A famous Russian chemist found that if all the elements known to chemistry were arranged one after another in the order of their (atomic) weights, beginning with the lightest, the eighth, fifteenth, twenty-second, and so on, had similar properties to the

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\*Strictly speaking, the word 'corpuscular' were better applied to what modern science now calls 'atomic,' and *vice versa*. But the terms are now crystallized into a set usage and are adopted for convenience as above.

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first; the ninth, sixteenth, and so on, to the second. Thus it became clear that there was a natural arrangement of all the chemical elements into seven great families.

The seven notes of the musical scale and the seven colors of the prismatic scale are of course familiar to every one.

In respect to motion, the American mathematician Southwell, dealing with the nebular theory, has also worked out a natural seven which he thus states:

"If two masses are moving in the same plane and at the same mean distance from the sun and are situated at an angular distance greater than  $60^{\circ}$  and less than  $180^{\circ}$  from each other, as viewed from the sun, their mutual perturbations will cause them to approach each other until the distance becomes equal to  $60^{\circ}$ ."

But if they are nearer than  $60^{\circ}$  to each other,

"their mutual perturbations will cause them to recede from each other until their distance apart becomes equal to  $60^{\circ}$ ; and they will always remain in a condition of stable equilibrium at that distance apart, and will revolve around the sun forever free from mutual disturbance."

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Sixty degrees is of course a sixth of a circle, which with the controlling center occupied by the sun, gives the seven.

Theosophy goes further than any of this. To the higher students it is shown that that one form of matter which, as we have seen, exists in seven states, is itself the seventh of a greater series. And that that white light (white to our vision) which breaks up into our seven colors, is itself a member of a set of seven lights, none really 'white' but standing to ultimate light as one of our spectrum colors stands to the light we call white.

But here we are of course far beyond the realm of present human senses. Yet in the course of special training, and much more slowly, yet inevitably, for us all in the normal course of our evolution, all these scales will become evident to us.

Theosophy also concurs with the proverb which gives man seven senses, two of which in most people are almost inactive, dealing with finer forms and essences. Some idea of the sixth of these may be gained from a

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study of the life of the woman known as the Seeress of Prevorst. In her however it was abnormally and prematurely unveiled by a peculiar form of ill-health.

Man as a part of greater nature must of course exhibit the seven in many ways. A subsequent Manual will deal at length with the most radical and essential of these sevens. It will suffice here merely to note it briefly.

Most obvious of the seven is of course his body, technically called the *sthûla-śarîra*. But within it is another, made of altogether subtler matter, the astral model-body or *linga-śarîra*. And it is because of the presence of this other — which is, as it were, a sort of architect's plan — that the millions of separate cells are able to arrange themselves in harmony, to form coherent organs, and to assume separate forms for the discharge of separate kinds of work. It is this which translates latent life, omnipresent in space, into life or *prâna*, adapted for the use of the cells. Shortly after death its remains

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are occasionally visible as the 'spook' of so many ghost-stories.

Here then we have three of the human principles — the visible body, the subtler 'architect's plan' body, and the vital force. Respecting the last, Theosophy, disagreeing with current physiology, teaches that it is a form of energy peculiar to itself.

Let us note now, for the fourth principle, that by 'body' Paul meant the *animal desires* of the body, or *kâma-rûpa*. These, in too many cases, dominate the man. But if he would be really man, would really show himself to be a soul, he must reverse that. It is through *thought* that he begins to establish himself as a man. Mind, or *Manas*, is the fifth of the human principles. Animals show the first traces of it, but they cannot even begin that inquiry which seeks an answer to the question, *What am I?* They are living units, and inwardly indestructible; but they are not yet *self-conscious* souls.

The sixth principle, or *buddhi*, is the crown of mind, that department of man's conscious



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nature from which come the inspirations of genius. Towards it ascend in their highest moments the musician, the poet, the artist. It is the soul in its own essentially spiritual nature. What it knows and feels when it is there, what it sees of divine truth, it must as far as possible bring down to the mind for expression on earth. Much is necessarily lost on the way. We all know that there are things which we feel but to which we can give no expression.

Lastly, the highest of the seven is Spirit, or *Âtmâ*, that which sustains all the rest and is their life; that which may be felt and known in the heart, but whose being is inexpressible in any kind of language. All the religious wars and quarrels that have ever rent mankind have come from attempts to dogmatize in words and terms about this indescribable presence and sustainer. Says H. P. Blavatsky:

“Theosophy, as a whole, is based absolutely on the ubiquitous presence of God, the Absolute Deity; and if IT itself is not speculated upon, as being too

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sacred and yet incomprehensible as a Unit to the finite intellect, yet the entire philosophy is based upon Its Divine Powers as being the source of all that lives and breathes and has its existence."

Man, however, is not limited to his "finite intellect," the fifth of his seven. He can know with another faculty which to intellect is unknowable, that which is inexpressible by language.

The path to this knowledge lies through aspiration renewed from day to day, meditation, performance of duty, compassion towards all that lives, self-mastery, and study.

## VIII

### THE MEANING OF DEATH

**W**HAT then is death according to Theosophy? It is not at all the horror that the world has made it. It is the passing of the soul into its own nature, for rest. In life it has permitted itself to become, as it were, of the nature of the body. If it has had joys, it has had pains that far outweigh, pains of body and pains of mind. It needs rest from all these and from struggle. Though it came from the Divine and is divine, in the case of the great majority of men it has never yet recognised that. It goes to the temporary rest and 'sleep' of death with all its purer earth memories clustering around it. And of these it fashions its unclouded and beautiful dream. The Divine Law shows itself at its tenderest, to the dead.

But the 'sleep' does not come at once.

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After the eyes have closed for the last time, after pulse and breath have stopped, life lingers long. And in those first hours, while the brain is yielding up its stores, and the soul is watching every detail of the now closed life pass again before it, there should be silence and peace in the death-chamber. Loving thought — yes, that helps. But passionately expressed and selfish grief is felt by the soul as a disturbance, hindering its work. For as memory is unpicked to its last fiber, the soul is learning, noting in the clear light where it failed, where it sinned, where it achieved victory in the hard life-battle with the thronging lower impulses. Not till this is done, till the wheat has been garnered, is that life really over. But at last there is the change. A sleep begins whose dreams are unclouded by anything evil, anything painful. The soul is no longer conjoined with the source of evil; it rests in the divine light.

That is why death is in nature's program — that the soul may rest and progress. And whilst it rests it is out of touch, mercifully,

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with life on earth. It can neither be reached by word or thought. Nor can it break its rest to communicate with those on earth.

Nevertheless there *is* one line of communication both ways. The pure current of love from those on earth does reach it, touches and enters the dream and makes it more living. And in return, its love for those it left behind touches them, strengthens them in the battle of life, helps them in their highest efforts for right, purifies them. Except for this current, *which is deeper than thought, deeper than word*, there is no communication possible. How otherwise could the soul rest?

But the rest is over at last; the divine light has given new energy for another life. The dream fades; the soul is drawn again to earth to take up its work. It comes once more among those with whom in other lives it has been associated. We pass from birth to birth, resuming old ties, making new ones, suffering, rejoicing, and through all growing. This great human family is ever getting closer and closer. As a man will find some

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old acquaintance unexpectedly in passing through some foreign city, so, it may be, there is already hardly a spot on earth where any one of us could incarnate and not find some he had known in other lives. There are many hates still to wear out between man and man; every one of us has much to overcome in his own nature. But we move. We can see that life will not always be as now. Sometime there will be universal comradeship and all men will have awakened to their divinity. They will feel in their hearts the constant presence of that Light to which they have given so many names, to which they have ascribed such diverse qualities, which sometimes they have figured as but a man, a personality drawn large; sometimes as a blind force; sometimes, alas! as an avenging fiend. It will be more really a presence to them, more really an ever-active inspiration, the more they understand that *in its fulness* it is beyond human imagining and description. They will be content to worship at the point where thought ceases, from that

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worship gaining perception of the reason and goal of human life.

From that Divine Light came man's soul; to it returns that soul, yet never more to lose in it the individuality that is the thread of each man's series of existences. Once a living soul, always a living soul. Once we were omniscient because we were parts of its omniscience. It called us forth, to win omniscience each for himself. Yet the very word omniscience, for us, is forever relative. When we have learned one nature, which is its robe, and tasted to the full the beauty of that knowledge, another higher and richer nature will be ready before our eyes.

Unhappiness and pain were no part of the program. We made them; unbrotherhood of each to each made them. It is only we who can end them. When man has learned to turn to his fellow-man with friendliness and compassion, with the will to give instead of to take, unhappiness is ended. And when he has learned to know himself, unwisdom and darkness are ended.

## IX

### THE SOURCE OF THEOSOPHICAL TEACHING

**I**T follows from all the foregoing that there must be, somewhere on earth, men who have fully awakened as souls; who, when they incarnate, are not dazed by the new animal life; who, when they die, carry on the unbroken thread of consciousness; who, life after life, have therefore been able to add wisdom to wisdom.

This is true, and there have been such men since the very beginnings of life on this planet. In this Lodge of men, always slowly growing in numbers, Theosophy has been handed on from age to age, from century to century. Its members, reincarnating in particular times and places according to human need, have founded all the great world-religions — aspects of Theosophy specially adapted to those times and places. This is



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not the only work they have done, and do, to further the world's progress; but it is the one with which we are now particularly concerned.

Nor is the whole of their work done by themselves in person. Many of those who have in every age, including our own, worked strenuously for humanity's enlightenment and welfare, have been their Messengers and pupils. The names of some of these — rarely declaring themselves as such — have been on every tongue and are prominently written on the pages of history. The work of others, quite as necessary and effective, has been beyond the recognition of the historian.

Upon one of these Messengers, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, devolved the task of introducing Theosophy anew and under that name to the Western world. Christianity, the Theosophy of Jesus, was fast disappearing. That great teacher, one of the Lodge, had sounded the keynote of Theosophy two thousand years before. At first the world

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paid little attention. When at last it did so, the greater part of the teacher's words were lost. Of *all* his teaching, but a fragment remains. And this fragment, sufficient in its purity as a guide to the perfect life, was soon overlaid by the dust of fierce controversies which have never ceased, adulterated here and there by the fancy of successive copyists, and obscured by multitudes of cruel or meaningless dogmas. A new presentation, in new language and adapted to the thought of today, was urgently needed by men. The Christian ranks contained, as always, many pure and lofty souls full of the spirit of unselfish sacrifice. But dogma was and is driving away thousands, and the tide of materialism was rapidly rising.

Mme Blavatsky began her work in New York in 1875, and before her death in 1891 her heroic and untiring labors had placed the Theosophical Movement beyond the possibility of failure. Enemies of every kind, men who saw in her teachings a menace to selfishness, to ambition, to dogma, gathered

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thick about her. She had to face open and hidden attack, slanders, libels and calumnies of every variety. The world will learn a great lesson when the history of these, now being written, is published; when all the threads are traced to their source.

At her death, the successor she designated, William Q. Judge, took up the work, becoming then the target for the same hostility. For twenty years previously, largely under her direction, he had sustained the Movement in America. This great labor, and the exclusive Leadership of the Movement throughout the world, which devolved upon him at her death, finally wrecked his health, and in 1896, working to the last, he died.

His successor, Katherine Tingley, whom he in his turn had appointed, then assumed the Leadership, which she still holds. She has been recognised by the members of the Theosophical Society throughout the world as a real teacher and wise leader. So profound in fact was this recognition that at a series of congresses of the Society held in

## **SOURCE OF THE TEACHING**

America and various other countries in 1898, it was resolved with practical unanimity to place the entire guidance of the work absolutely under her direction, and to accept as her successor whomsoever she might appoint. The Theosophical Society at the same time was merged into the larger body of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD, the full and complete title being THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Theosophy by that name, secure from admixture with any lower currents, is thus henceforth assured to the world. And as the world moves on to peace and brotherhood, more and more of the ancient wisdom can be given to it. In the meantime, within the Organization, there will always be some few prepared for those higher teachings which it would as yet be useless and even dangerous to sow broadcast.



*There is No Religion Higher than Truth*

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## **The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society**

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*Established for the benefit of the people of the earth and all creatures*

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### **OBJECTS**

This BROTHERHOOD is part of a great and universal movement which has been active in all ages.

This Organization declares that Brotherhood is a fact. Its principal purpose is to teach Brotherhood, demonstrate that it is a fact in nature and make it a living power in the life of humanity.

Its subsidiary purpose is to study ancient and modern religions, science, philosophy and art; to investigate the laws of nature and the divine powers in man.

\* \* \*

THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, founded by H. P. Blavatsky at New York, 1875, continued after her death under the leadership of the co-founder William Q. Judge, and now under the leadership of their successor, Katherine Tingley, has its Headquarters at the International Theosophical Center, Point Loma, California.

This Organization is not in any way connected with nor does it endorse any other societies using the name of Theosophy.

**THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY** welcomes to membership all who truly love their fellow-men and desire the eradication of the evils caused by the barriers of race, creed, caste or color, which have so long impeded human progress. To all sincere lovers of truth, and to all who aspire to higher and better things than the mere pleasures and interests of a worldly life, and are prepared to do all in their power to make Brotherhood a living energy in the life of humanity, its various departments offer unlimited opportunities.

The whole work of the Organization is under the direction of the Leader and Official Head, Katherine Tingley, as outlined in the Constitution.

**Do not fail to profit by the following:**

It is a regrettable fact that many people use the name of Theosophy and of our Organization for self-interest, as also that of H. P. Blavatsky, the Foundress, to attract attention to themselves and to gain public support. This they do in private and public speech and in publications, also by lecturing throughout the country. Without being in any way connected with the **UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**, in many cases they permit it to be inferred that they are, thus misleading the public, and many honest inquirers are hence led away from the truths of Theosophy as presented by H. P. Blavatsky and her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley, and practically exemplified in their Theosophical work for the uplifting of humanity.

# The International Brotherhood League

*Founded in 1897 by Katherine Tingley*

## ITS OBJECTS ARE:

1. To help men and women to realize the nobility of their calling and their true position in life.

2. To educate children of all nations on the broadest lines of Universal Brotherhood, and to prepare destitute and homeless children to become workers for humanity.

3. To ameliorate the condition of unfortunate women, and assist them to a higher life.

4. To assist those who are, or have been, in prisons to establish themselves in honorable positions in life.

5. To abolish capital punishment.

6. To bring about a better understanding between so-called savage and civilized races, by promoting a closer and more sympathetic relationship between them.

7. To relieve human suffering resulting from flood, famine, war, and other calamities; and, generally, to extend aid, help, and comfort to suffering humanity throughout the world.

For further information regarding the above Notices, address

KATHERINE TINGLEY

INTERNATIONAL THEOSOPHICAL HEADQUARTERS

POINT LOMA, CALIFORNIA

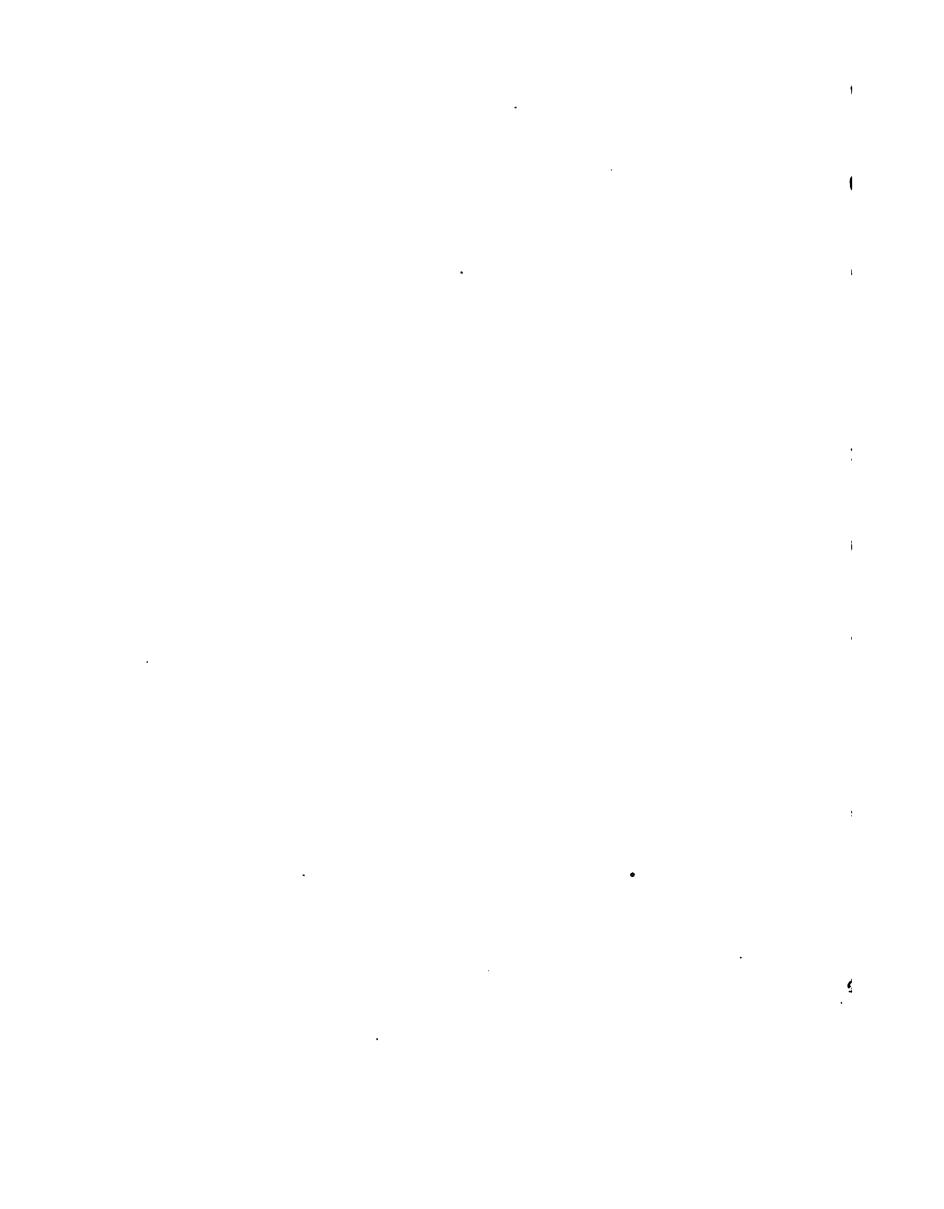




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*There is No Religion Higher than Truth*

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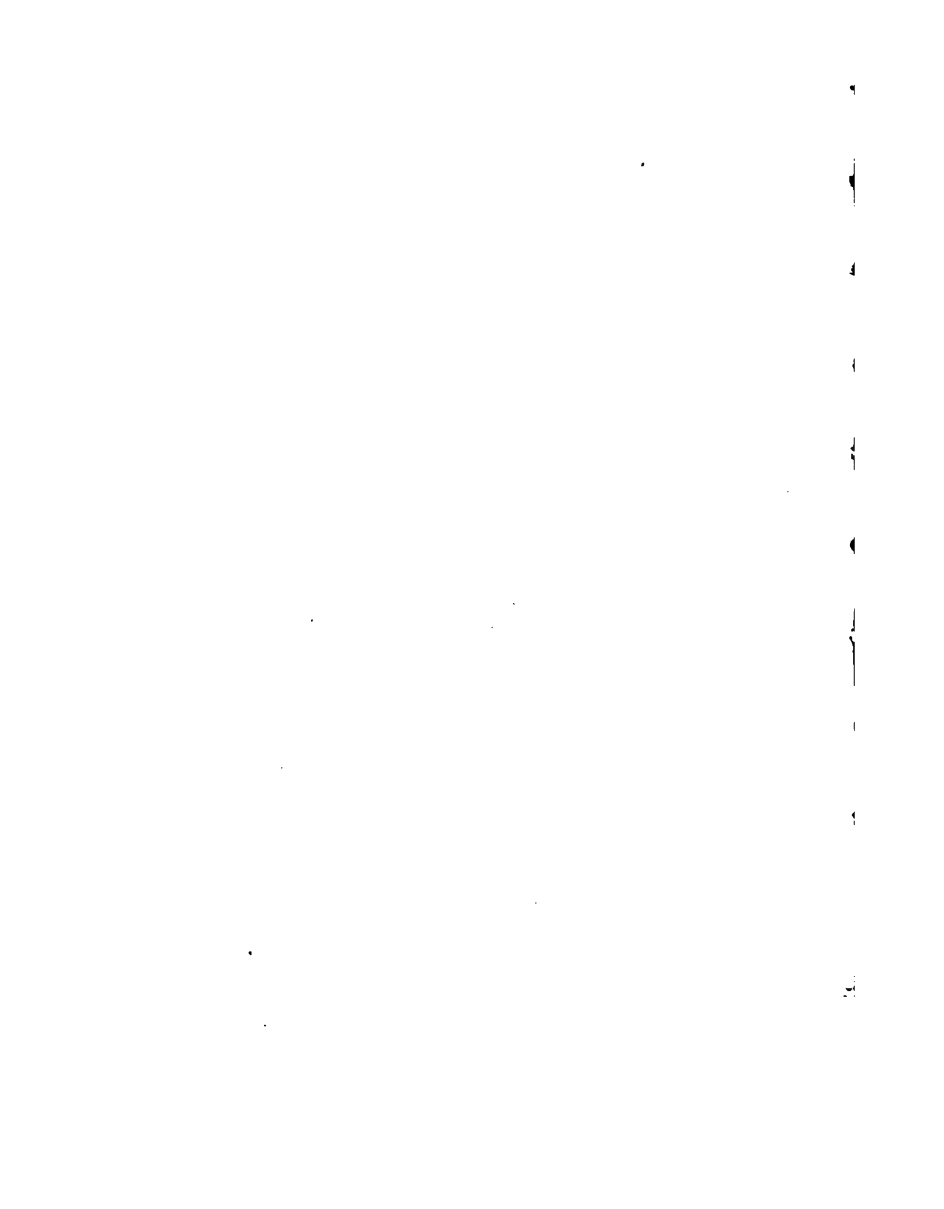
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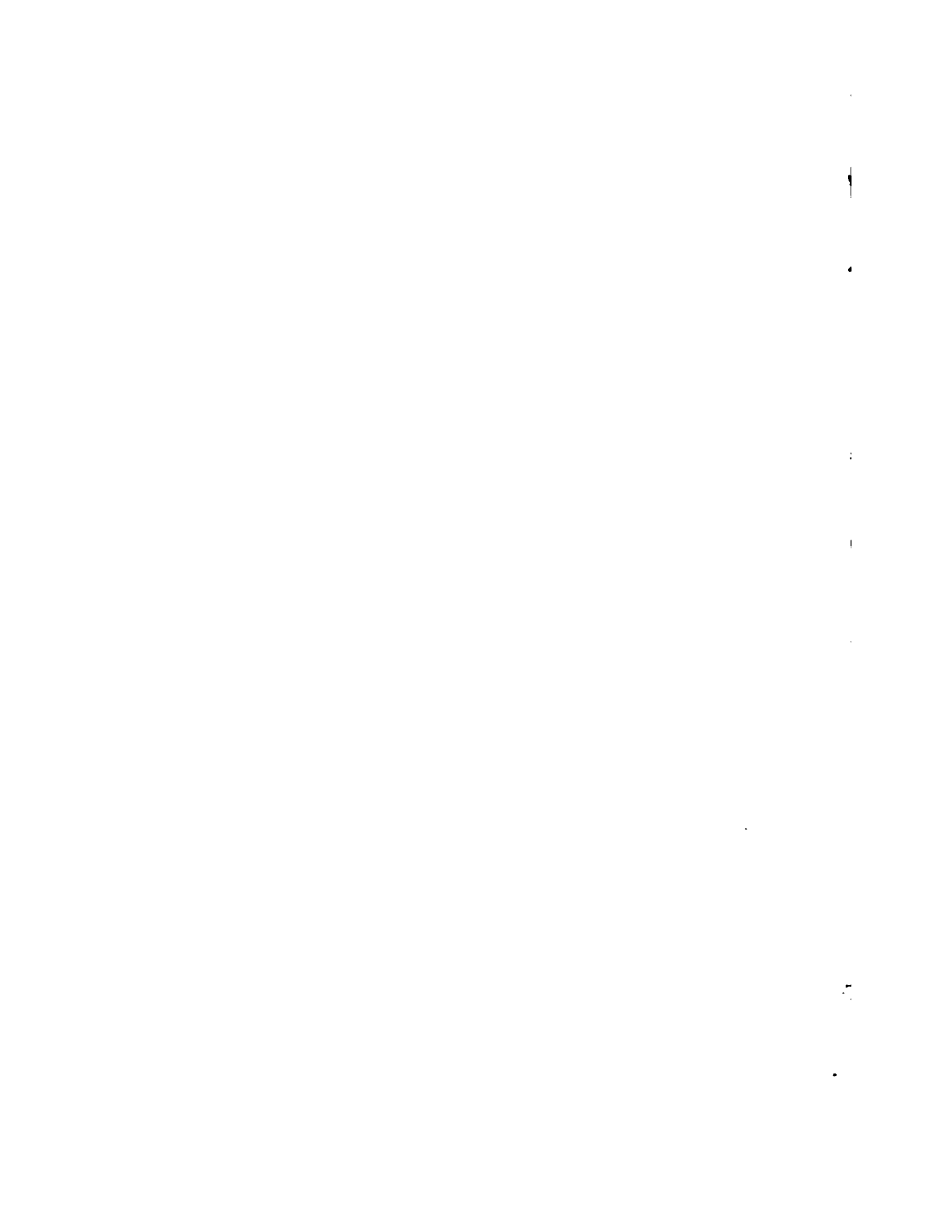
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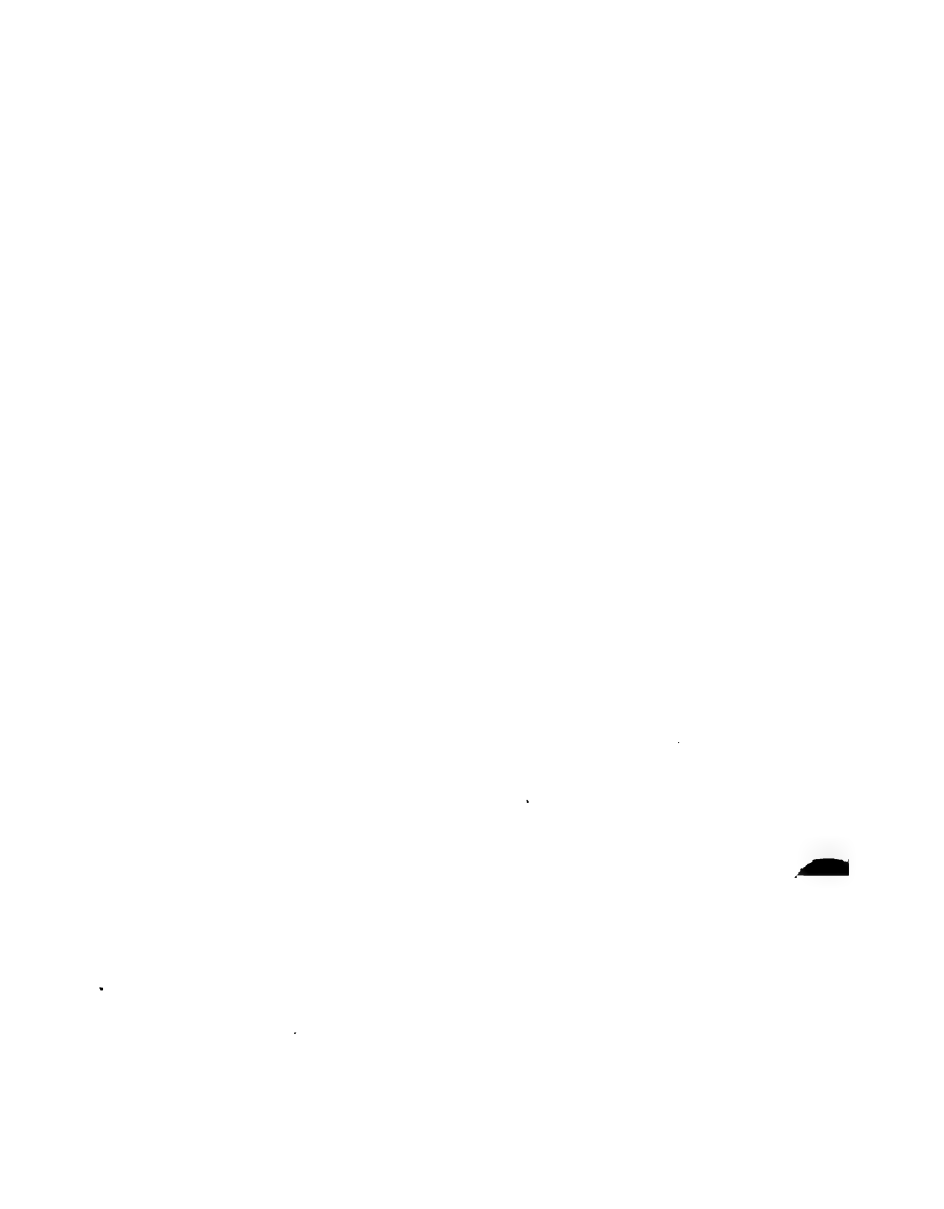
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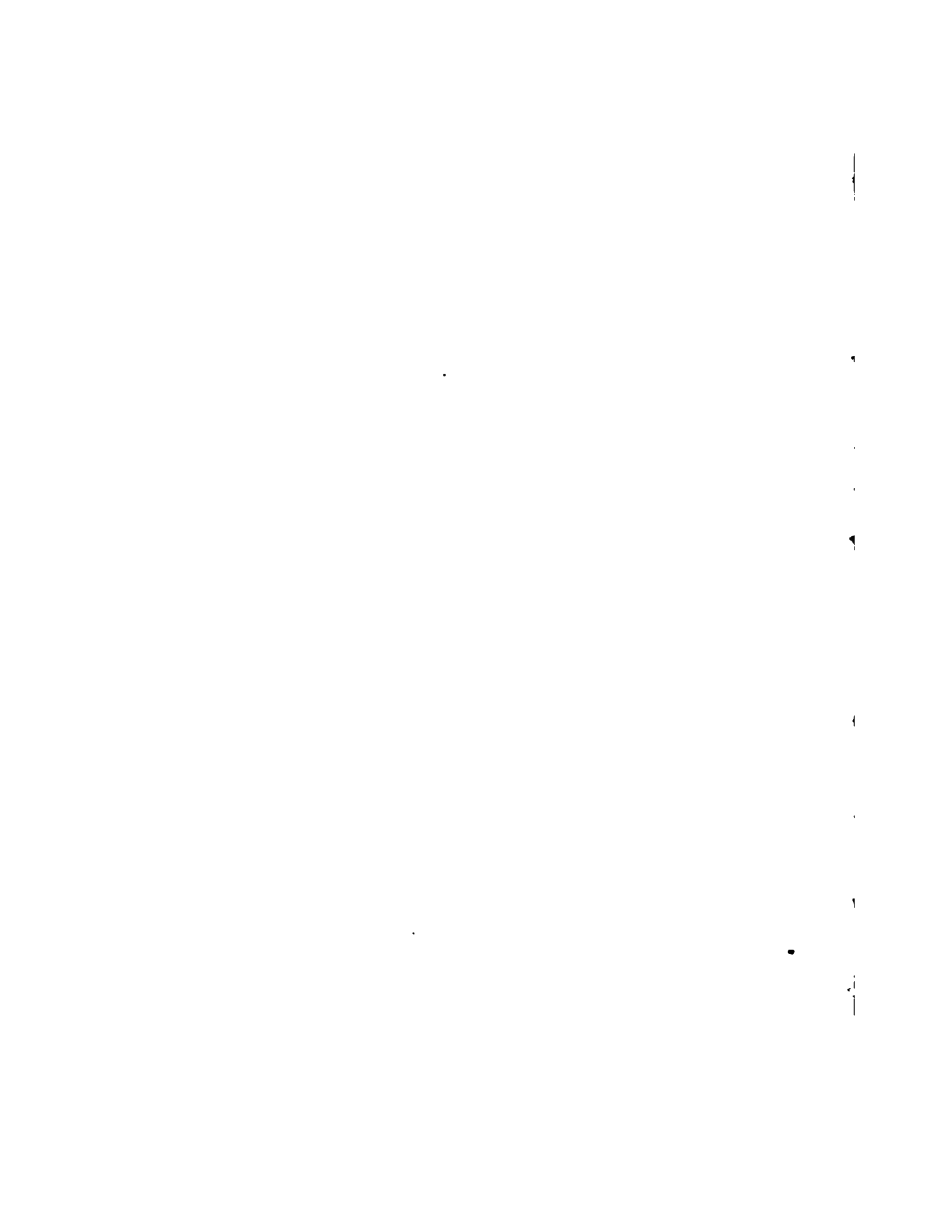
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# THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS



III

KARMA

The Aryan Theosophical Press  
Point Loma, California



# THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

III

KARMA

BY

A STUDENT

SECOND EDITION

The Aryan Theosophical Press  
Point Loma, California  
1910



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## PREFACE

**T**HE remarks under this head are intended to be introductory to each of the Manuals.

First, as to the spirit in which they are offered. These Manuals are not written in a controversial spirit, nor as an addition to the stock of theories awaiting public approval. The writers have no time to waste in arguing with people who do not wish to be convinced, or who ridicule everything which is new to their limited outlook. Their message is for those who desire to know — those who are seeking for something that will solve their doubts and remove their difficulties. For such, all that is needed is a clear exposition of the Theosophical teachings; for they will judge of the truth of a teaching by its power to answer the questions they ask. People realize, much more now than in the early days of the Theosophical Society, the value of Theosophy;

for the ever-increasing difficulties engendered by selfishness and materialism, by doubt and the multiplicity of theories, have created an urgent demand which it alone can satisfy.

Again, it is necessary to state clearly and emphatically the genuine teachings of Theosophy, as given by the Founder of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, and her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley. For, as H. P. Blavatsky predicted, there are persons who have sought to pervert these teachings and turn them into a source of profit to themselves and their own selfish and ambitious schemes. The true teachings do not lend themselves to such purposes; their ideals are of the purest and most unselfish. Hence these persons have sought to promulgate under the name of Theosophy a perverted form of the teachings, from which Brotherliness and other pure motives are omitted, and which contains doctrines which H. P. Blavatsky showed to be maleficent and destructive. As these pseudo-Theosophists have gained a certain amount of notoriety by using the names of the Theosophical Society and its Leaders, it is necessary to warn the public against them

and their misrepresentations. Their teachings can easily be shown, by comparison, to be directly contrary to those of H. P. Blavatsky, whom they nevertheless profess to follow. Instead of having for their basis self-sacrifice, self-purification and the elevation of the human race, these teachings too often pander to ambition, vanity and curiosity. In many cases they are altogether ridiculous, and only calculated to make people laugh. Nevertheless, as these travesties have served to discredit the name of Theosophy and to keep earnest inquirers away from the truth, it is well that the public should know their nature and origin. They are the work of people who were at one time members of the Theosophical Society, but who did not find in it that food for their own personalities of which they were really in search. So they turned against their teachers in wounded pride and vanity, and started little societies of their own — with themselves at the head.

The writers of these Manuals have no personal grievance against any such calumniators. Inspired by a profound love of the sublime teachings of Theosophy, they have made it

their life-work to bring the benefits which they have thereby received within the reach of as many people as possible. And they feel that they will have the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the public in exposing folly and bringing the truth to light.

Theosophy strikes unfamiliar ground in modern civilization, because it does not come under any particular one of the familiar headings of Religion, Science, Philosophy, etc. into which our age has divided its speculative activities. It dates back to a period in the history of mankind when such distinctions did not exist, but there was one Gnosis or Knowledge embracing all. Religion and Science, as we have them today, are but imperfect growths springing from the remnants of that great ancient system, the Wisdom-Religion, which included all that we now know as religion and science, and much more. Hence Theosophy will not appeal to the same motives as religion and science. It will not offer any cheap and easy salvation or put a premium upon mental inactivity and spiritual selfishness. Neither can it accomodate itself to the rules laid down by various schools of modern thought as to

what constitutes proof and what does not. But it can and does appeal to the Reason. The truth of doctrines such as Theosophy maintains, can only be estimated by their ability to solve problems and by their harmony with other truths which we know to be true. But in addition to this we have the testimony of the ages, which has been too long neglected by modern scholarship, but which is now being revealed by archaeologists and scholars, as H. P. Blavatsky prophesied that it would in this century.

It may perhaps be as well also to remind those who would criticise, that the state of modern opinion is scarcely such as to warrant anybody in assuming the attitude of a judge. It would be quite proper for a Theosophist, instead of answering questions or attempting to give proofs, to demand that his questioners should first state their own case, and to be himself the questioner. The result would certainly show that Theosophy, to say the very least, stands on an equal footing with any other view, since there is no certain knowledge, no satisfying explanation, to be found anywhere.

Since the days when the wave of materialism swept over the world, obliterating the traces of the ancient Wisdom-Religion and replacing it by theological dogmatism our religions have had nothing to offer us in the way of a philosophical explanation of the laws of Being as revealed in Man and in Nature. Instead we have only had bare statements and dogmatic assertions. The higher nature of man is represented by such vague words as Spirit and Soul, which have little or no meaning for the majority. The laws of the universe are briefly summed up under the term "God," and all further consideration of them shut off. Then came a reaction against the dogmatism of religion, and man pinned his faith to knowledge gained by study and reflection, limiting his researches however to the outer world as presented by the senses, and fearing to trench upon the ground which dogmatic theology had rendered the field of so much contention. The result of this has been that neither in religions nor sciences, have we any teaching about the higher nature of man or the deeper mysteries of the universe. This is a field which is left entirely

unexplored, or is at best the subject of tentative and unguided conjectures.

Until, therefore, religious teachers have something definite, consistent, and satisfactory to offer, and until science can give us something better than mere confessions of nescience or impudent denials with regard to everything beyond its own domain, Theosophy can afford to assume the rôle of questioner rather than that of questioned, and does not *owe* anybody any explanations whatever. It is sufficient to state its tenets and let them vindicate themselves by their greater reasonableness; and any further explanation that may be offered is offered rather from goodwill than from any obligation.

Theosophy undertakes to explain that which other systems leave unexplained, and is, on its own special ground, without a competitor. It can issue a challenge to theology, science, and other modern systems, to surpass it in giving a rational explanation of the facts of life.

Again, there are some questions which it is beyond the reach of the human mind, in *its present stage of development*, to answer; and



it would scarcely be just to arraign Theosophy for not answering these.

Judgment should in all cases be preceded by careful study. There are always those who will impatiently rush to questions which a further study would have rendered unnecessary; and it is safe to say that the majority of "objections" raised to Theosophical teachings are such as could have been solved by the objector himself, had he been a genuine student. In the ordinary courses of education, scholars are required and are content, to accept provisionally many of the teacher's statements, in full confidence that further study will explain what in the beginning cannot be made clear. In the same spirit an earnest student of Theosophy will be wise enough to hold many of his difficulties in reserve, until, by further investigation, he has gained better acquaintance with his subject. In the case of those who are not willing to adopt these wise and patient methods of study, it may be reasonably questioned whether they are the more anxious to learn or to disprove.

Above all it is sought to make these Man-

uals such that they shall appeal to the heart and not *merely* to the head; that they shall be of practical service to the reader in the problems of his daily life, and not mere intellectual exercises. For there have been in past days books written by persons more distinguished for a certain grade of mental nimbleness than for heartfelt devotion to the cause of truth; and these have appealed only to those people who love intricate philosophical problems better than practical work. But as H. P. Blavatsky so frequently urged, the message of Theosophy is for suffering humanity; and the great Teachers, whose sole purpose is to bring to mankind the Light of Truth and the saving grace of real Brotherhood, can have no interest in catering for the mental curiosity of merely a few well-to-do individuals. Even soulless men, said H. P. Blavatsky, can be brilliantly intellectual; but for those who are in earnest in their desire to reach the higher life intellectual fireworks alone will have little attraction. We intend, therefore, to keep the practical aspect of the teachings always to the front, and to show, as far as possible, that they are what

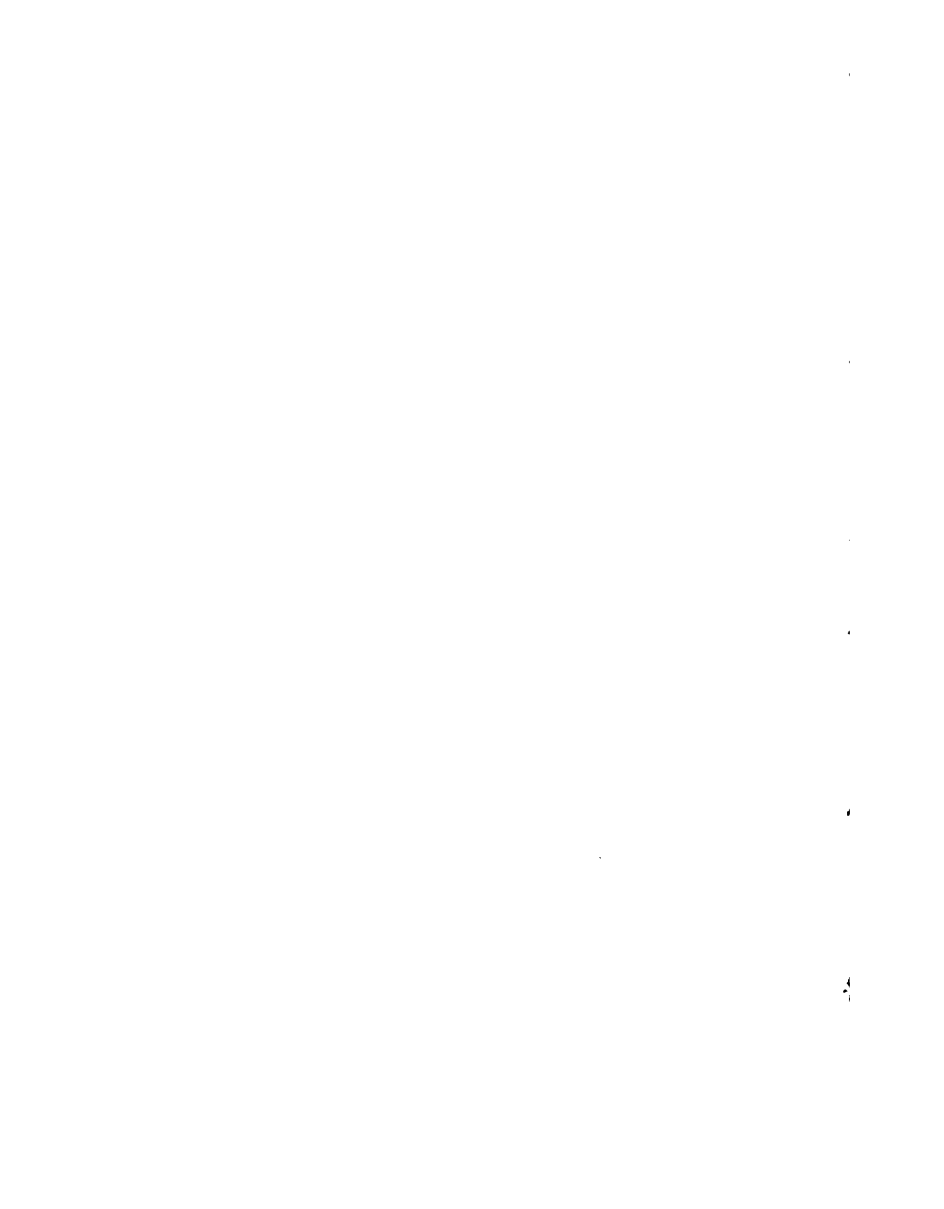
they claim to be — the gospel of a new hope and salvation for humanity.

These Booklets are not all the product of a single pen, but are written by different Students at the International Headquarters of the **UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY** at Point Loma, California. Each writer has contributed his own quota to the series.

For further explanations on Theosophy generally, the reader is referred to the Book List published elsewhere in this volume and to the other Manuals of this series, which treat of Theosophy and the various Theosophical teachings.

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WHAT WE MEAN BY  
THE "DOCTRINE OF KARMA"

**W**HEN Theosophists speak of the doctrine of Karma, they usually mean the doctrine that as we have sown, so shall we reap; and what we reap, that have we also sown. In other words, our fate and fortune are the consequences of our own acts and we incur reward or penalty according to our exact merits. There is no arbitrary interference of a divine dispensation, nor is anything left to mere "chance." This doctrine is not comprehensible without the accompanying doctrine of Reincarnation, because many of the experiences which we meet with are the result of things we did in past lives, and many of the things we do now will not yield their effects until a future life. When we speak of a person's "Karma," and say (for instance) that his Karma is good or bad, we mean — not exactly his luck and not exactly his merit — but something between the two.

Thus the doctrine of Karma is simply a

more fully stated form of the scientific doctrine of the "Conservation of Energy," a doctrine which, as scientific men tell us, holds that there is an exact relation between cause and effect in the workings of Nature. But the doctrine of Karma extends this principle to the realm of moral, mental and spiritual forces, and in fact to the whole of life, making it a universal Law.

It may seem almost a truism when stated clearly; yet most people fail to recognize the Law, and the chief reason is that they are prevented by their religious and scientific ideas from perceiving its truth. We cannot understand Karma unless we admit the Soul's eternal existence throughout a long succession of earth-lives; for a single earth-life is but a minute fragment of a man's life and not enough to "show the pattern." And since neither religion nor science teaches us anything about Reincarnation, but both represent man's life on earth as lasting less than a century, it is impossible to make the notion of absolute justice fit in with them.

# I

## RELIGION AND KARMA

**T**HE absence of the doctrine of Karma from ordinary religious teaching causes a grave discrepancy — the difficulty of reconciling our conviction of the justice of the Higher Law with the facts of life as we find them.

This difficulty is responsible for innumerable mental conflicts, for sermons and essays innumerable, for disputes, schisms, secessions, creations of new sects, and lapses into "infidelity." It is practically the whole of religious thought in a nutshell, for nearly all questions turn on this difficulty in some form or other. It is, in short, the conflict between our intuition (the Divine voice from within) and our intellect, and arises from the fact that the latter is not developed proportionately but is hampered by ignorance and strange fallacies.



There is no real conflict between intuition and intellect, between faith and reason; the conflict is between true faith and false reason. The justice of the Law ought to be not only felt in the heart but perceived by the mind; and it would be so if we only had a comprehensible science of human life such as Theosophy affords.

There is no need to enlarge upon the subject of the incompatibility between our conceptions of life and our conviction of divine justice; the topic is only too familiar. We all know that on the theory that man lives only one earth-life, the good go unrewarded and the wicked prosper; that people suffer experiences for which there seems neither rhyme nor reason; and that the Deity seems to be totally different. Some have given up religion altogether and profess not to believe in the existence of Deity, and others have sought various ways of explaining the discrepancy; while still others dismiss it as far as possible from their minds. Some say that we cannot expect to understand "God's ways

and purposes, but that he knows what is best." Some try to prove that the good are rewarded interiorly in some way and the wicked are punished in their consciences. Some say that all inequalities will be adjusted in heaven. But at best these explanations are very inadequate, and what they achieve is to show the sublime power of faith against the obstacles of ignorance and superstition.

We have been told again and again that it is "presumptuous to reason about God's purposes and that our poor human intelligence cannot hope to understand them." Nevertheless knowledge and science have progressed, and we slowly recognize that the laws of Nature are but the voice of Deity, and that we need not be afraid of finding out anything we ought not to know, for Deity's wisdom is infinite, surpassing all human knowledge. Our progress in science has enabled us to understand Life better than we did before. In the same way we should surely endeavor to understand its laws in the moral world and to extend our knowledge as far as possible; and

we ought to realize that the more we find out, the more it will exalt our conception of Deity. True science has nothing impious or irreverent in it. Our intellects are god-given and we should use them for what they are meant for — for sounding the truth.

When we find that ordinary theories of human life are altogether at variance with the true religion of our Souls — with the Divine revelation from within — we ought to realize that there is something the matter with those theories. And when we find that the doctrine of Karma, and its twin-doctrine of Reincarnation, explain these discrepancies and reconcile the facts of Nature with our faith in Divine justice, we ought to treat that doctrine with respect, as worthy of consideration.

The idea that the inequalities of this life are adjusted in heaven is more consoling than logical. This is a point that has been discussed under the head of "Reincarnation," where it was pointed out that under such a theory our life on earth becomes meaningless, being an utterly insignificant episode in the midst

of an eternity of spiritual existence. We are sent here to learn lessons and snatched away before we have hardly begun, leaving behind many unfulfilled hopes, unachieved purposes, uncorrected mistakes, and future lessons. There is nothing more glaringly inconsistent than this notion of a single, unique earth-life lost in an infinite ocean of Soul-life. Though it is consoling to read the incomparable words that tell us that "Thy sun shall no more go down," and "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," these words acquire a sublimer meaning when understood as the promise of spiritual liberation and of the blessed state of the perfected Man, than when taken as the description of a heaven to which the few elect shall go to be eternally recompensed for what they may have done during the few short years of earth-life.

The doctrine of Karma teaches that there is a perfect relation between cause and effect in the sphere of human acts and experiences, as in the sphere of natural science. In other words it teaches that perfect justice rules in


human affairs, and that experience is proportioned to merit. No man can possibly suffer or enjoy consequences which he has not merited by his own actions; and everything which we reap, that have we also sown. But the doctrine of Karma does more than merely assert this principle. It demonstrates how it is true. Our intuition and sense of the fitness of things tells us that the Power which rules must be just. The alternative is to suppose that that Power is capricious; a supposition which is equally untenable whether we conceive of that Power as Deity or as any "scientific" equivalent for Deity. Theologians and scientists agree in attributing to their respective deities perfect justice and impartiality, the contrary hypothesis being untenable as affording no basis for philosophy. Thus, whether ruled by "God," or by some equally mysterious and all-powerful agency called "chance" or "destiny," we are equally in the hands of Law, just, impartial, unerring.

But how to show the just workings of the omnipresent Law — that is the difficulty.

Difficult, however, only so long as we have an untrue theory of life; for the false must necessarily be out of key with the true.

The acceptance of the doctrine of Reincarnation is an essential condition for the understanding of Karma. For the period occupied by a single life-time is so short in comparison with the career of the Soul, which is the real Man, that it does not suffice for a tracing out of the sequence of cause and effect. Many of the experiences which we undergo in this life are the result of things we have done in our past lives, and many of the things we are doing now will not take effect until a future life. For, as a day is but a single link in the chain of our life from birth to death, so is that life itself but a link in the greater chain of the Soul's life.

The difficulty of reconciling our innate conviction that the universe is governed by just and impartial law, with the facts of life as they appear to our limited view, has been the great stumbling block of philosophy and religious speculation. Deeply religious natures



have been content to trust and rest in the faith that all will be made clear in a future life. But more thoughtful minds have sought a more satisfactory explanation. But, ingenious as some of these explanations are, the attempt is useless without Reincarnation; for it is simply not true that justice is done within the space of a single life. But the knowledge of the fact of Reincarnation makes all simple. The doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma complete and explain each other. On the one hand, the principle of causation demands that we shall live again on earth; for we create during one life causes which cannot be worked out in any other way except in another earth-life. A man dies full of unrealized longings for certain experiences peculiar to life on earth, and these intense desires will draw him back to the field of their fruition. He goes away with many things begun that must be finished, and many purposes planned but not carried out. His life is only the preface to a necessary sequel — one chapter out of many in the great story. On the other

hand Reincarnation explains Karma. The two truths are mutually consistent; and further, they are consistent with the other teachings of Theosophy and the remaining facts of experience. Thus does the truth vindicate itself by its consistency and wholeness.

The notion that perfect justice rules the world is one from which we cannot escape. It may be called a primary axiom of philosophy. No philosophy can be made on the opposite hypothesis; for the statement that all is chaos and hap-hazard is nonsense. We may accept such a statement, if we like, but we cannot build a philosophy on it; for all reasoning proceeds on rules and all thought has definite laws. We cannot do a sum on the hypothesis that 2 and 2 make 4 or 5 or 100 fortuitously. Thus, whether we call the source of eternal Law, God, or Nature, or Eternal Justice, or the Conservation of Energy, we are equally compelled to postulate that it is *law* and not chaos.

Ever since, thirty years ago, H. P. Blavatsky asserted as one of the fundamental principles



of the Theosophical Society the existence of the spiritual powers of Man, there has been in our modern world a rapid tendency to get the Christian religion out of its old dogmatic grooves and back to the original lines of its Founder; to enlarge our conceptions both of God and of Man. We used to hear that the authority of churches and of authoritative interpretations of the scriptures were the last court of appeal, and that any science which contradicted these was wrong and pernicious. Now the cry is rather, "Let us study life and Nature in every possible way and endeavor to comprehend God's plan. No knowledge which science can give us can possibly transcend the limits of that knowledge which is man's right, nor can any study of Nature lead us away from its divine author." Formerly we used to hear that the promptings of our own inner consciousness were unreliable and even sinful; but now we tend rather to recognize them as among the many channels through which the Eternal reveals itself.

Let us then, in the spirit of this larger view

of religion, try to understand eternal justice better. It is the theological God, and the various narrow conceptions of Deity that have so confused our ideas as to the relation between Deity and Man, and given rise to the contrariety between science and faith. The idea of the Eternal has been belittled by attributing to it all kinds of human limitations and infirmities. As said by H. P. Blavatsky:

INQUIRER. Do you believe in God?

THEOSOPHIST. That depends upon what you mean by the term.

INQUIRER. I mean the God of the Christians, the Father of Jesus, and the Creator: the Biblical God of Moses, in short.

THEOSOPHIST. In such a God we do not believe. We reject the idea of a personal, or an extracosmic and anthropomorphic God, who is but the gigantic shadow of *man*, and not even of man at his best. The God of theology, we say—and prove it—is a bundle of contradictions and a logical impossibility.

INQUIRER. Then you are atheists?

THEOSOPHIST. Not that we know of, and not unless the epithet of "Atheist" is to be applied to all those who disbelieve in an anthropomorphic God.

We believe in a Universal Divine Principle, the root of ALL, from which all proceeds, and within which all shall be absorbed at the end of the great cycle of Being. . . .

Our DEITY is neither in a paradise, nor in a particular tree, building or mountain; it is everywhere, in every atom of the visible as of the invisible Cosmos; in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for IT is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality. (*The Key to Theosophy*, chapter v.)

It is clear that the God of the Universe can not be limited by those human attributes of personality, etc., which so limit man's knowledge and power. Such a conception of Deity is inconsistent with the notion of omnipotence. Yet there are those who, in their superficial reasoning, imagine that by depriving Deity of personality, we thereby *reduce* him. But there is no question of reducing the Deity to the level of those beings which have not yet developed personality; that would be mere savage nature-worship or fetish-worship. Deity is *beyond* and *above* personality.

## NOTE ON THE WORD "LAW"

ATTENTION is drawn to the fact that the word "law" is commonly used in two different senses, which are often confounded with each other. It may mean (1) an edict, command, or ordinance; (2) a principle, rule, or prevalent order of things. The former is the expression of some will which has to be obeyed; the latter is a formulation of known facts. Thus the law of Moses is not similar to the law of inverse squares, nor are the laws of harmony things which must be obeyed under penalty of legal proceedings. These distinctions may seem trivial when thus presented, but they are not so when slipshod methods of thought cause them to be forgotten, as is sometimes done by inexperienced reasoners, who, having clothed their thoughts in words, afterwards forget that some of the words have two meanings and pick them up again by the wrong end as it were. For instance, when we observe that two bodies always attract each other with a force varying directly as the product of their masses and inversely as the square of their distance apart, we call this fact the "law of gravitation"; but when we go and deliberately aver that this law of gravita-

tion (which we have just invented) is capable of actually pulling down an apple off a tree upon the head of a subsessile philosopher, we are guilty of the above mentioned blunder; because the dry fact is that no general principle, however neatly put, can pull down anything, any more than the laws of thought can compel a man to think. The implication is that what pulled down that apple was some mysterious force whose workings are known as the law of gravitation; but to say that the law did the work is like saying that a man walks by the force of ambulation.

In the expression "Law of Karma," the word "law" would seem to be used in both senses, sometimes the one, sometimes the other; but we must not mix them up. We can use the word to mean an abstraction, a generalization, of our merit and demerit, or of our experiences; or we can use it to denote an actual dynamic force which acts upon us and brings about the experiences. For there are Beings who are the agents of Karma and Man himself is one of them. These Beings are mentioned in another part of this Manual.

## II

### SCIENCE AND KARMA

**M**ODERN science is proud of its generalizations. One of these is the Law of Conservation of Energy. The Law of Karma may be regarded as an extension, a very great extension, in fact a completion of this.

The Law, as enunciated by modern science, states that the sum-total of energy in a closed system remains constant throughout any changes of form that energy may undergo; and, more broadly, that the sum-total of energy in the universe is always the same. No energy can be lost. When it disappears in one form, it reappears in another. The quantity of mechanical energy used up in friction generates an equivalent of heat-energy. A given quantity of electricity will decompose a given quantity of copper-sulphate and yield a given quantity of copper. The

quantity of copper which will be obtained can be exactly calculated, and any incidental escape of energy can also be calculated and allowed for. It is known to chemists that compounds contain a varying amount of potential energy locked up in them, and that this energy, which is often enormous, is set free when the compounds are decomposed. In other cases energy is absorbed. Of late years this science of thermo-chemistry has been extended by the discovery of new facts which lead to the conviction that the atoms themselves are compounds of still smaller rudiments, and contain in their turn an enormous quantity of potential energy. It is by virtue of this energy that they are so stable; and it is by virtue of the same energy that they may become so potent if we can decompose them. Needless to say, it is radium that is chiefly referred to here.

(Of course reasonable and sincere scientists are not disturbed at finding that their scheme of the conservation of energy is liable to exception at any moment. This is what one

naturally expects of a provisional hypothesis. Nevertheless prejudice often contends with reason and renders innovations, however true, unwelcome. Hence there are some who have not welcomed the vast vista which the phenomena of radium have opened out. We are here confronted with an apparently illimitable source of energy, and the only item which figures on the other side of our balance-sheet against this prodigal expenditure is the almost imperceptible wasting of a minute particle.

But this is a very small circumstance when we take into account all the things that science has omitted altogether from its calculations. What of mental energy and the power of a human will? Are not these also forces? If we are to take into account the dynamic value of a human thought, we must indeed measure it in terms whose magnitude and variability are altogether in a different scale from that of the grosser forces. And if we are not to take these things into our calculations, then our calculations are indeed limited and inadequate.



True science declares that not only the gross physical plane which we can see, and those subtler but still physical forces whose effects we can measure, but the whole universe of life, with all its forces, mental, psychic and spiritual, must come under exact law and be subject to the same eternal rule of cause and effect. Otherwise there is chaos, or the arbitrary will of an imperfect Deity.

There are not a few cases in which the workings of the law of Karma can be directly traced, even by our (at present) limited intelligence. We can understand, for instance, how early years spent in physical excess will impair the organism and bring on paralysis in old age. No one nowadays would think of attributing the stroke to the will of an avenging deity; yet such was at one time the belief. True we may still admit that the punishment is by the "decree of Deity," since Deity represents eternal Law and Justice; but this admission does not prevent us from recognizing the part which our own folly has played in the affair. In brief, we recognize that the

acts of man call into play Divine Law; that both God and man may be, in different senses, the cause of the punishment; and that though we invoke God, we must at the same time put our own shoulder to the wheel.

In addition to the effects whose cause we can trace, there are effects whose cause we cannot (in the present state of our knowledge) yet trace. But is there any sound reason for placing these effects in a different category? Does not logic declare that they also are due to the operation of eternal justice? Take the case of a man born lame. We cannot trace the connexion between his affliction and his (*presumptive*) fault. We do not know of Reincarnation, so our speculations are shut off effectually. But if we could see that man's past, in his preceding lives, we should probably be able to recognize the cause of his affliction, its justice and its needfulness for the Soul's experience.

In the case of a bodily disease such as that just cited, we can often trace out the chain of causation, because it inheres in the visible

body which our science can study. Yet even here we fail, because sometimes the beginnings of the chain were in a past life. People are born with hereditary predispositions to disease; and, though we can trace the cause so far as heredity is concerned, we do not discern the moral connexion or perceive how the man's affliction depends on his own past acts. We do not know of Reincarnation, and so our investigations are brought to a final stop.

In the case of other kinds of fate, such as sudden financial ruin, accident, or untimely death, it is harder to trace a connexion, because we have no science which has investigated the phenomena of those inner planes where the invisible forces act. We still have to take refuge in the phrase "visitation of Providence," or, what amounts to the same thing, "chance." Luck and fate are counters which denote the gaps in our knowledge, like the *X* in an equation.

But it will be easy to understand why we fail to discern the *rationale* of fate and fortune, if we reflect what tremendous gaps there

are in our knowledge. What do we know of thought? We can trace a few of its effects when they operate through our own bodily mechanism and produce visible action, or when they act on our nervous system and produce physiological changes. But thought has a power which acts outside of the body. A thought is a most powerful center of force, and once created it passes away from us and continues to exist, in company with countless other thoughts, in a kind of "space" which is entirely different from the so-called "three-dimensional" space of our sense perceptions. This thought-world is however an objective reality; and we all live in it, breathe it and stumble blindly about in it with our undeveloped inner senses. What about the dynamics of this thought-world? Ay, there is the gap in our knowledge. We are, to use a metaphor of H. P. Blavatsky's, spinning webs of destiny around us like a spider spins his web. We are each hour, each minute, accumulating stores of energy in the thought-world, which, by a law as exact and reasonable as that of

physical elasticity, will sooner or later react on ourselves.

Let us consider how a so-called "fortuitous" event takes place. What is chance, anyhow? If I toss a coin, what determines whether it will turn up heads or tails? Obviously there must be a chain of mechanical causes—the movements of the muscles and nerves, etc. And behind that must be mental causes, since the mind moves the body. If it is not my conscious intelligence that directs the issue, then it must be some unconscious element in my mind or nervous system. We cannot pause to follow out this thought further, but it leads to the mysteries of the lost science of divination. Our fate is perhaps determined by the "chance" direction we take on the streets or the "casual" meeting of an acquaintance. But what determines which road we shall go? A mental caprice. And what determined that mental caprice? All is law; there is a chain, though we may not see it; chance is a word that means nothing.

Sometimes we get up in the morning and

everything goes wrong. It is because of our mental state. Normally our safety is secured by a thousand little unconscious and half-conscious acts and instincts. But, if our senses are dulled and our nerves jangled, our instincts fail us, our reflexes get tangled, and we bump our head and upset our lamp. Or, again, we may have created such an unpleasant atmosphere around us by our thoughts that other people feel it and shun us or instinctively assail us. Here the effect can be traced to the cause. On the larger scale it is the same. In short, life is full of causes of which we do not know the effects, and effects of which we do not know the causes. On such a basis will you presume to deny the doctrine of Karma? Better study a little first.

In short, Theosophy does not admit of such a thing as chance or accident. Nothing can happen without a cause; though the cause may be invisible.


It is further evident that there are several threads of Karma in the skein of human life. An event may have a physical cause and a

moral cause also. Therefore it is absurd to debate whether a thing is brought about by a moral cause or a physical cause, because it is usually brought about by both. We attribute diseases and calamities to physical causes, and other races have attributed them to the visitation of the Gods; but, clearly, whether caused by the Gods or not, they must have a physical cause also; and conversely, an epidemic, although brought about by carelessness in sanitation, may and must also be a moral retribution.

The place where our survey of life breaks down most seriously is at the beginning and end of a life-time. None of our popular teachings tell us anything about birth and death. The subject here trenches upon that of Reincarnation, which is dealt with in another Manual; but it is necessary to say something about it here. Since a man reaps in one life the consequences of what he has sown in previous lives, it is clear that there must be some explanation as to how the influence is carried over from one incarnation to another.

If anyone feels inclined to shrink at the difficulty of the explanation, let him remember that ordinary life is full of similar difficulties which science does not attempt to explain, yet with which we are so familiar that we take them for granted. Why, then, balk at a difficulty which is no greater, merely because it is less familiar?

A good illustration for our present purpose is that of a plant and its seed. In that seed (or around it or somewhere in connexion with it) there must be stored up the germ of everything which the future plant will possess. But what can science tell us about this mystery? Will the microscope disclose the conditions which determine the future character of the plant? Wherein or how are those characteristics contained? We can only whisper, "Molecules," and speculate whether the mere collocation of imaginary particles in an ideal space has anything about it of a causal or determinative power. The fact is that the real seed is invisible, and the entire plant exists complete in all its parts in a finer kind of






matter called astral matter before it does so physically. (See Manual on "The Seven Principles.")

And so with man, it is useless to try to trace a physical connexion between one incarnation and another. Since the Reincarnating Ego is the only part of man which survives the interval, the causes must inhere in that. These causes are in the germ state; they are latent, like the contents of the plant-seed.

#### SKANDHAS

For the purpose of explaining to some extent how the attributes of one earth-life are carried over to the next, it will be convenient to use a term employed in the Buddhistic philosophy — the term *Skandhas*. *Skandhas* may be defined as the "attributes" with which the essential Man is clothed, and which go to make up his character and personality. In the Buddhist teaching there are five of these *Skandhas*: *rûpa*, form or body, material qualities; *vedâna*, sensation; *sañña*, abstract ideas; *samkhâra*, tendencies of mind; *viññâna*, men-



tal powers. Of these we are formed; by them we are conscious of existence, and through them communicate with the world about us.—(*The Key to Theosophy*, ch. VIII)

When the Ego enters Devachan, it takes with it only the finest aroma of the Skandhas, the cream of the experiences which it has acquired during life—only the most spiritual essence of those experiences. All the grosser part disappears, with or after the physical death. The bodily skandhas decay, later on the astral skandhas; and so with each set, the kâmic skandhas dying out in *Kâmaloka*. But, though these attributes of the personality disappear from the field of action, they do not utterly perish. They pass into the latent or germ state, thus to abide until the re-entry of the reincarnating Ego into earth-life, when they attach themselves to it and thus become the agents of recompense and retribution. In short the simile of the seed applies. Further elucidation of this point will be found in the Manuals on “Man After Death” and “Kâmaloka and Devachan.” It is sufficient for our

present purpose to point out that there is actually a concatenation of cause and effect bridging the grave and bringing about unerringly exact consequences on all planes, physical, psychic, mental, etc.

The mysteries of the process by which an Ego, about to reincarnate, selects, or is assigned by the agents of Law, the physical vehicle which he is to inhabit, are too deep for our present capacity. But let no dull mechanical conceptions of the "scientific" brain mar the contemplation of a subject so solemn and sacred. Not in the realm of "blind forces" moves the Ego, nor does the immortal Self of man obey molecular attraction and fortuity. In the realms whither our Souls pass after death, dwell Intelligences as far superior to those of mortal man as is their radiant vesture to his dull clay. Karma is no mere mechanical law of action and reaction; it uses minds and wills as its agents, minds and wills of all grades, from those of men who blindly obey its mandates, up to those of Great Souls who willingly acquiesce in its sublime equity.

### III

#### THE WORKING OF THE LAW

**B**UT, though we cannot reduce Karma to the level of a mere physico-mechanical process, neither can we on the other hand leave it an empty abstraction. There must be agents by which are performed the operations that unite cause to effect. And here it is necessary to call attention to a fallacy of modern science. This fallacy is that which postulates in the universe two kinds of force, intelligent or living, and unintelligent or dead. The former kind is supposed to rule in the animated kingdoms of Nature and the latter kind in the mineral kingdom. But according to logic and Theosophy there can be no such thing as a blind force, and even some scientists themselves have analysed the conceptions of modern physics and proved that such a thing is a logical absurdity. (See *Concepts of Modern*

*Physics*, by the late Judge Stallo, who analyses the meanings of the words "force," "matter," "atom," etc.)

Even the humblest actions of the particles of matter, the lowliest chemical reactions and the play of electrical phenomena are brought about by the action of Mind and Will of some sort; and, furthermore, this Mind and Will must belong to some Being or Beings. The trinity of Self, Mind, and Will is the unresolvable unit of our intellectual conceptions; we must postulate them either directly or in veiled form, and beyond it we cannot analyse. Of course this does not deny that there are also mechanical agencies, but it merely states that such mechanical agencies are the secondary causes, minds being the primary causes. Just as our own body is a mechanism actuated by a mind, so is every other body in the universe. It will thus be seen that modern science has a vast gap to fill, in not accounting for the conscious element in Nature; and into this gap would probably fit many of those conceptions of which we read in ancient beliefs and which

recognized the existence of Nature-Spirits, Elementals, Gods, Devas, Gnomes, Genii, Nymphs, and so on. Degraded as these conceptions often are, into mere popular superstitions, they are nevertheless a survival of what was once a luminous and exact Science of Nature.

In short Theosophy postulates an innumerable host of Beings other than Man and the animals, existing on various planes of space invisible to the physical eye, and graduated from those which fulfil the lowliest functions up to those which preside over the destinies of planets. Such Beings are the agents of Karma — a fact which was surely recognized by antiquity and which is still believed in, though in superstitious manner, by the peasantry and some foreign peoples. For examples we might turn to an almost inexhaustible number of sources. Take Puck and the fairies, for instance; what are they but the agents for carrying out minor operations of adjustment in Nature? Mere fairy-tales and comedies now, perhaps; but not always so. So with the Fates

and Furies of classical mythology and with innumerable Gods in the Pantheons of Oriental religions.


Such beings are the agents of Karma, fulfilling upon Man the destinies which he invites and courts by his acts and thoughts. They act according to the laws of their being, and Man, by acting upon them, causes them to react upon him. As one of the Manuals of this series deals specially with Nature-Spirits, we will not discuss the subject further here, but merely give the following quotation from H. P. Blavatsky:

. . . the "four Mahârâjahs" or great Kings of the Dhyân-Chohans, the Devas who preside, each over one of the four cardinal points. They are the Regents or Angels who rule over the Cosmical Forces of North, South, East and West, Forces having each a distinct occult property. These BEINGS are also connected with Karma, as the latter needs physical and material agents to carry out her decrees, such as the four kinds of winds, for instance, professedly admitted by Science to have their respective evil and beneficent influences upon the health of Mankind and every living thing. . . . It is not the "Rector" or "Mahârâjah" who punishes

or rewards, with or without God's permission or order, but man himself—his deeds or Karma, attracting individually and collectively (as in the case of whole nations sometimes), every kind of evil and calamity. We produce CAUSES and these awaken the corresponding powers in the sidereal world; which powers are magnetically and irresistibly attracted to—and react upon—those who produced these causes; whether such persons are practically the evil-doers, or simply Thinkers who brood mischief. Thought is matter, we are taught by modern Science; and “every particle of the existing matter must be a register of all that has happened.”—*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, part I, stanza 5.

#### INEQUALITIES IN KARMA, AND HOW ADJUSTED

It has been stated by the Teachers of Theosophy that no human incarnation is exactly adapted in every detail and degree to the merits or requirements of the Ego;—a statement which, at first sight, might seem to contradict the general statement of Karma. But Karma provides that justice shall be done in the long run. If perfect balance were maintained in every detail and every moment,





there would be nothing left to be adjusted. It is quite in accordance with the workings of Nature that there should be temporary deviations from harmony, to be subsequently restored. In the material world there is never perfect adjustment or completeness. It is a world of adjustments and compromises. In the Manual which deals with Devachan, it is pointed out that one of the results achieved by the Soul's sojourn in that state is the adjustment of inequalities of fate met with during life.

#### HOW MAN DISTURBS THE BALANCE OF NATURE

ONE way of explaining the Law of Karma is to state that man, by his actions, disturbs the harmony and balance of life; and that the life, in its effort to regain harmony, brings a reaction upon him. This is quite in accordance with scientific conceptions of the balance of forces. It would be stated somewhat as follows. The sum-total of energy within a closed

system is always the same, and every displacement within that system causes a displacement of equal and opposite effect in the other parts of the system. Every act of man rebounds like a stone that is thrown; and in the long run the man will prove to be his own target.

We can also say that an action is by its very nature as such, dual, consisting of an outgoing and a return, or of equal and opposite phases like a wave in physics; but that in our short-sighted philosophy, we discern only one half of the action. Many actions pass through their entire phase in a very short space of time, so that their duality is apparent; as in a quarrel, for instance, the twofold character of which is proverbial. If we put our finger into the fire and are burnt, the double character of the event is obvious; cause and effect are united. But very often there is between the two an interval of time so long that we fail to discern the connexion; and, when it is added that this interval may even include the gulf of death, the failure to trace the connexion becomes still more comprehensible.

## IV

### THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR MINDS

#### PERSONALITY. PERSONAL DEITY

**I**F we are to understand the ways of eternal justice we must be prepared to shake off the fetters of our minds; and when we consider the influences under which those minds have been developed, we shall scarcely fail to admit *a priori* that there must be many such fetters. Spinoza says that the reason why men live in such a state of puzzlement and discontent is that they regard everything from the standpoint of personal interest and allow their passions and imaginations to become mixed up with their perceptions and to give everything false color and perspective. It is therefore necessary, says he, to eliminate carefully such disturbing factors from our mind, as a scientific observer eliminates all sources of error.

from his instruments. Now what are the chief preconceptions to which we are liable?

First let us consider some of the narrow ideas which we have unconsciously imbibed from centuries of dogmatic religious teachings. There is the notion of the personal God. This notion gives rise to the ideas of caprice, anger, favor and similar personal emotions assignable to a great personality. To this notion of a personal God who can be incensed or appeased, we have added as a natural corollary the idea of a subservient Man, "born in sin," unworthy and incompetent, dependent for all good upon divine favor. These ideas tinge the mind and cause it to take narrow and mean views. Take, for instance, the way in which we regard our fortune. We call it good or bad according as it pleases or displeases our feelings, according as it meets the approval or disapproval of our little wills and judgments. And we say that we are the "subjects of God's anger or pleasure" accordingly. In brief we take a view of reward and punishment which is not very wise and far-seeing. It cannot be

denied that religious teachings have favored this view, for do they not hold up continually before our eyes the picture of a Deity angered or appeased? Whenever great minds have taken a broader view, it has been in spite of dogmatic teaching and not infrequently in the teeth of persecution.

It is now time that we should free our minds from these elementary notions, by which the ideas of God and of human life are associated with fear and abjectness, as in the case of savages. These notions arise from the lower nature of man, which is mean and narrow; they are not consistent with the dignity that should belong to a divinely inspired being such as man is.

It is the part of a suspicious and surly nature to quarrel with its lot and imagine that it is being punished when it is not. It is not dignified to cry out whenever anything happens that is not quite in accordance with our wishes, and to cringe before providence in a spirit of supplication. The general division of fortune into good and bad is made on very

narrow principles. Wealth is considered to be good fortune and poverty bad; but from a higher point of view this may or may not be true. Again, it is possible that bodily affliction may be a greater blessing than health in certain cases. The higher our point of view the more tolerant become our ideas of fate and fortune, until we arrive at the conclusion that everything which can happen to us may be for the good of the Soul.

But still more important is the attitude we take in regard to our responsibility. If we consider ourselves the victims of external powers, we having no control over our destiny, then it is no wonder if we fall into an attitude of supplication and often feel ourselves ill-used, or grow indifferent to life's duties. But, once let the idea prevail that we are masters of our destiny, and the whole attitude of mind changes. We can say with Faust:

Du, stolzes Herz, du hast es ja gewollt!  
" 'Tis thou, proud heart, 'tis thou hast willed it so!"  
The so-called misfortunes which beset us are those which we have incurred by our own

Will, for the education of our character; as one who is in training sets himself difficult tasks to accomplish. To quarrel with our fate is to be disloyal to our own Soul; it is to become forgetful of our real destiny. Let us learn to look upon ourselves as knights braving the dangers in search of Truth, like those heroes of the sacred myths who slew dragons and overcame enchantresses in order to win the Princess. In short, let us revive the ideals of Chivalry, which taught manly dignity and womanly self-respect, and which have been largely supplanted by that debasing attitude of mind according to which we are "miserable sinners," whose duty is to go through this life in humble submission until we are released from it to go to selfish bliss. Chivalry upheld the true Freedom — the freedom of the human Soul — and taught men to regard all situations as opportunities, and all so-called misfortunes as chances for showing courage and for learning something. We have become sordid and commercial in our ideas, even of religion. There is too much petty calculation of chances

and weighing of profit and loss; we are too anxious about the fate of what we call our souls. There has been a tradition which associated piety with worldly prosperity and exalted selfish thrift into a cardinal virtue; and, however useful this may have been on occasion, it has been carried too far.

Hence the words "punishment" and "reward" acquire new meanings. The word punishment as implying a visitation of anger or revenge, should be banished from our dictionary. Retribution is but the natural outcome of mistaken acts, and it should be regarded as a just and merciful provision by which we are enabled to learn better. A man with an easy life may be a feeble character who has not yet merited more strengthening treatment; while a man who has a difficult life may be one who has earned the right to be taught.

One could of course dilate to any extent on such subjects; but the present purpose is to show the bearing of the doctrine of Karma on them. The doctrine of Karma simply brings our intellectual convictions into harmony with



our moral convictions; replacing those theological errors which have been such stumbling blocks. We *feel* that man is master of his own destiny; Karma enables us to *see* it.

Personality has acquired altogether too great a prominence in our civilization. It colors all our views. Personal salvation occupies too large a place, and we each aim at a personal and exclusive relationship with God. According to Zoroastrianism, personal attainment was considered, not as being for the benefit of the possessor, but as an addition to the sum-total of good of the world. And truly our personality is a little thing, compared with the greatness of the world — compared with the greatness of the true Self. Looking at humanity in its crowds, how can we imagine that its multitudinous petty personalities are all so important! Dependent on this exaggeration of the personality is an exaggerated attachment to earth-life and an exaggerated fear of death. We are not sufficiently conscious of our immortality. Nor are we sufficiently conscious of our solidarity. There are many social souls


whom the world does not deem very worthy, who may be much nearer the Light than many a pious and respected character, because they are not cankered with the blight of self-righteousness. As a learned divine sings :

Give me an heart that beats  
In all its pulses with the common heart  
Of human kind, which the same things make glad,  
The same make sorry! Give me grace enough  
Even in their first beginnings to detect  
The endeavors which the proud heart still is making  
To cut itself from off the common root,  
To set itself upon a private base,  
To have wherein to glory of its own,  
Beside the common glory of the kind!  
Each such attempt in all its hateful pride  
And meanness, give me to detect and loathe,—  
A man, and claiming fellowship with men!—*Trench*

And we are apt to carry this personal attitude of mind into our reflections on the subject of Karma. The question of our own personal merits and demerits looms too large before the eye. But, though perfect justice is done to each unit of humanity, it might be better if we were less anxious about our own

particular case. The comradeship with our fellows which is so necessary and so precious to us involves us in a system of give and take, as to the exact adjustments of which it is not the part of a generous nature to inquire too closely. We throw in our lot with others for better or worse, and get our fair share of the good and bad luck plus the inestimable advantage of comradeship. There have been times in the world's history when the personality was not so emphasized as it is with us; when people were more conscious of being part of the universe; when they felt so secure in their larger life that they fretted less about their smaller. But this is the age of individualism — say rather of personalism — even in religion, even in prayer, even in aspiration. Hence Karma will, one fears, appeal to many in the light of a personal solace, whereas one would rather offer it as a broad general doctrine affecting the lives of mankind in the mass.

The very inadequate idea of Godhead derived from narrow religious teachings also hampers us in our conceptions of Karma.



For, having endowed God with many of the limitations which go to make up a personality, including caprice, we are obliged to reduce our notions of eternal justice to a somewhat similar human standard. Hence enter the notions of favor and propitiation, which are more proper to savages worshipping a tribal fetish than to advanced people believing in eternal justice.

#### NATIONAL AND RACIAL KARMA

WHAT has been said about the undue emphasis given to the personality in modern civilization is well illustrated by the teachings as to national or racial Karma. In *The Key to Theosophy*, by H. P. Blavatsky, we find the following:

INQUIRER. But surely all these evils which seem to fall upon the masses somewhat indiscriminately are not actual merited and INDIVIDUAL Karma?

THEOSOPHIST. No, they cannot be so strictly defined in their effects as to show that each individual environment, and the particular conditions of life

in which each person finds himself, are nothing more than the retributive Karma which the individual has generated in a previous life. We must not lose sight of the fact that every atom is subject to the general law governing the whole body to which it belongs, and here we come upon the wider track of the karmic law. Do you not perceive that the aggregate of individual Karma becomes that of the nation to which those individuals belong and, further, that the sum total of National Karma is that of the World? The evils that you speak of are not peculiar to the individual or even to the Nation; they are more or less universal; and it is upon this broad line of Human interdependence that the law of Karma finds its legitimate and equitable issue.

INQUIRER. Do I, then, understand that the law of Karma is not necessarily an individual law?

THEOSOPHIST. That is just what I mean. It is impossible that Karma could readjust the balance of power in the world's life and progress unless it had a broad and general line of action. It is held as a truth among Theosophists that the interdependence of Humanity is the cause of what is called Distributive Karma, and it is this law which affords the solution to the great question of collective suffering and its relief. It is an occult law, moreover, that no man can rise superior to his individual

failings without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part. In the same way no one can sin, or suffer the effects of sin, alone. In reality there is no such thing as "Separateness"; and the nearest approach to that selfish state which the laws of life permit is in the intent or motive.\*

Thus the laws of association forbid any one from living separately, and individual fate is interblended and interwoven with collective fate in a way that resembles that in which atoms are interrelated. We share both the good and the ill fortune of others with whom we are associated.

---

\* *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 199, 200

## V

### KARMA AND FREEWILL

#### FATALISM

**C**URIOUS conundrums are sometimes propounded on this question, owing to obscurity of reasoning; but they can be readily solved by maturer thought. For instance, people may argue, "Since all events are indissolubly joined to their previous causes, what is the use of making any effort?" This is the delusion of fatalism. It ignores the fact that owing to the Divine part of our nature, we have a center which stands outside of the Karmic chain and by which we are able to act independently and set new causes in motion.

Besides this, there is a logical fallacy involved, as the following instance will show. Suppose a man should fall off a ladder, ~~we~~ you to abstain from catching him upon

the ground that that would be interfering with the law of gravitation? Clearly you cannot interfere with the law of gravitation, which will go on acting, whatever you may do; and equally clearly you *can* help the man.

In the same way it is your duty to do your duty and there is no fear that you will thereby interfere with the law of Karma. You yourself are an agent of Karma, and it may be a part of that man's Karma that he should be helped. It is in your power to be that helper or not.

The doctrine of fatalism, in fact, means nothing, and cuts both ways. If it leaves us free to let things alone, it leaves us equally free to act. It is our duty to help others all we can, and if it is not their Karma to be helped, the Law will take care of that. Besides, as said before, the humane motive of a man is an extraneous power inasmuch as it proceeds from a higher source, and therefore it can add to the total of good in the universe.



## KARMA IN ANTIQUITY

NEMESIS was a conception of the ancient Greeks, which represents Karma in its retributive aspect. Their dramas depicted the consequences of rebellion against the moral law. The agents by which this retribution was brought about were called the "Furies," the Eumenides or Erinnyes, female deities of grim aspect, with black and bloody garments and serpents instead of hair. They had a burning torch in one hand and a whip of scorpions in the other. It is noteworthy however that, after they had ceased to persecute Orestes, they became changed in character and were called the Eumenides, which means the "benevolent."

The Fates or Parcae represented another similar conception, being three sisters who determined all destiny and to whose decrees even Jupiter himself was held by many to be subject.

The Norns were the ministers of destiny in

the Scandinavian mythology. Of them it is said:

the Norns shall order all,  
And yet, without thy helping  
Shall no whit of their will befall.

For even the freest will is conditioned by obligations of some kind, however high those obligations may be; and the Norns represent the sum-total of destiny.

In Buddhism the teaching is most pronounced. In the *Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold, we read:

KARMA—all that total of a soul  
Which is the things it did, the thoughts it had,  
The "Self" it wove with woof of viewless time,  
Crossed on the warp invisible of acts.

Before beginning, and without an end,  
As space eternal and as surety sure,  
Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,  
Only its laws endure.

It will not be contemned of any one;  
Who thwarts it loses, and who serves it gains;

The hidden good it pays with peace and bliss,  
The hidden ill with pains.

It seeth everywhere and marketh all;  
Do right—it recompenseth! Do one wrong—  
The equal retribution must be made,  
Though DHARMA\* tarry long.

It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter-true  
Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs;  
Times are as naught, tomorrow it will judge,  
Or after many days.

By this the slayer's knife did stab himself;  
The unjust judge hath lost his own defender;  
The false tongue dooms its lie; the creeping thief  
And spoiler rob, to render.

Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,  
Which none at last can turn aside or stay;  
The heart of it is Love, the end of it  
Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey!

The Books say well, my Brothers! each man's life  
The outcome of his former living is;  
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,  
The bygone right breeds bliss.

---

\* The Law.

That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields!  
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn  
Was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew!  
So is a man's fate born.

He cometh, reaper of the things he sowed,  
Sesamum, corn, so much cast in past birth;  
And so much weed and poison stuff, which mar  
Him and the aching earth.

If he shall labor rightly, rooting these,  
And planting wholesome seedlings where they grew,  
Fruitful and fair and clean the ground shall be,  
And rich the harvest due.

The Oriental word Kismet is a charm to  
reconcile one to one's justly incurred lot, but  
not an excuse for inaction as it is so often  
made to be.

Following are some quotations illustrating  
the convictions of various writers as to Karma.

We are our own children.—*Pythagoras*

Nothing can work me damage but myself.—*St.  
Bernard*

We make our fortunes and we call them fate.—  
*B. Disraeli*

Men must reap the things they sow.  
Force from force must ever flow.—*Shelley*

Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk with us still.—*Beau-  
mont and Fletcher*

The soul contains in itself the event that shall  
presently befall it, for the event is only the actualiz-  
ing of his thoughts.—*Emerson*

Not from birth does one become a slave; not  
from birth does one become a saint; but by con-  
duct alone.—*Gautama the Buddha*

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it  
are the issues of life.—*Solomon*

Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for what-  
soever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For  
he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap  
corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall  
of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not  
be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall  
reap if we faint not.—*Paul*

Judge not, that ye be not judged: For with  
what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and  
with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured  
to you again.—*Jesus*

## VI

### THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

#### THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF A FAITH IN THE MORAL LAW

**I**N conclusion we must emphasize the vital need, which there is at the present day, for a renewed faith in the Moral Law. Although religion ought to inculcate this faith, religion as we have it today no longer does so, nor does any other belief which we have. It will be useless to contest this accusation in face of the undeniable facts; if we are to judge our religion and our philosophies by their fruits, we must bring them in as defaulters.

The ideals of conduct upon which men act prove that they do not realize the existence of the Moral Law, or at any rate they do not realize it strongly enough to influence their conduct. They act as though in the belief that

it is possible to benefit oneself by courses which involve injustice to one's fellow man. Hence we have the reign of what is called "individualism" but were better called "personalism." In commerce this means that one man or one corporation strives after its own individual welfare, disregarding or wilfully sacrificing the interests of others. The result upon commerce as a whole is most disastrous; for whereas with all the inventions of modern science it ought to be possible for every one to live in comfort with very little labor, the average prosperity is very low and a large proportion of the population spend their days in toil. The wastage and friction of commerce, pursued on such wrong lines, is very great; but we scarcely realize it from want of anything better to contrast it with. The growth of disease and insanity, the problem of how to educate and manage our children, the problem of the poor, and all the other problems which agitate us today, are evidences of the lack of law and order in our life.

The "fear of God" is no longer effectual;

it is not real enough; and when it does produce an effect, this effect is not of the right kind. It conduces rather to the establishment of a private and personal relation with the Deity, with a view to personal salvation beyond the grave; whereas it should incite us to reliance on the dignity of our own Divine nature and to efforts to render *this* life a heaven.

In such expressions as Providence, the Moral Law, Divine Justice, God's Will, Nature, and the like, we recognize the Law of Karma; we recognize that, as eternal Life pervades Nature, so an eternal spiritual Life pervades the realms of conscience, adjusting all needs and deserts. As the indestructible Life in Nature preserves the balance, destroying what is useless, recreating what is useful, and being in short a divine law of justice in the lower kingdoms; so the Moral Law adjusts things in the moral or spiritual world, destroying the evil and regenerating the good. We are conscious that a murderer offends against this Moral Law and that retribution will fall on



him sooner or later. The difference between ourselves and other races is that we, with our crude unphilosophical theology, speak of the direct personal intervention of God—the Power that formed the universe of stars; while the other religions have preferred to imagine the Supreme Deity as manifesting his justice and power through a host of celestial Beings. But the difference between Monotheism and Polytheism is largely one of names.

It is maintained that all modern civilization is indebted to the influence of Hebraic and Christian religion for its strong sense of the Moral Law. It is true that the Wisdom of the Past has descended to us largely through the medium of these two religions; but it may well be asked whether they have not cramped our conceptions of Eternal Justice. We shall find in Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, the Vedânta, and the other ancient religions, the same ideas of Eternal Justice and Moral Law, but uncramped by the idea of the personal Deity. This idea has introduced the notion of *fear*. We talk of the “fear of

God." When the absurd theological notions of Godhead cause us to reject our belief in God, we may — possibly — lapse into disbelief in the Moral Law. We need, therefore, a way of recognizing the Law without the theological conceptions.

We need a living sense of the Moral Law and of Eternal Justice, detached from narrow theological conceptions. When we reject the absurdities of some theological teachings, we need not reject the Moral Law too. When we cease to "fear God," we need not give ourselves over to license, as if there were no Law. What we need is a consciousness, a direct feeling or perception, of the Moral Law, strong enough to act as an incentive to justice and a deterrent from injustice, as real as the laws of health. No man needs a church or pulpit to tell him that it is wrong to soak himself in whiskey; he feels that he is defying the laws of health and they will be revenged upon him. It ought to be so with the Moral Law. When a man thinks of swindling you for his own immediate pecuniary gain,

he ought to feel that he is injuring *himself*; it ought to hurt him to do it. But he is ignorant and stupid; he is a fool. He has not the sense of solidarity. He has the impression that he possesses real private interests apart from the interests of his kind, which is a delusion. Experience demonstrates to us over and over again that it is a delusion, yet we are so enslaved by our impulses and so purblind to our real interests that we continue to blunder.

To develop in human society this consciousness of the *Moral Law as a fact in Nature*, independently of religious sanction, what is necessary? We must develop the sense of solidarity, the sense of the unity of life. "Separateness" is a delusion; men are united like the branches of one tree, and disunion means decay. When we do injustice we pollute the fount of our own life. This is a fact which daily experience teaches us, and it is to the shame of religion that instead of confirming and explaining it, it throws every difficulty in the way of our recognizing it.

For our Occidental religion as falsely understood fosters the idea of separate personality, separate souls and separate salvation, and makes Man a radically evil Being. It removes the Moral Law from its state of immanence in human nature and transfers it to the Deity.

Now what is meant by the "sense of solidarity"? Not a mere intellectual acceptance of the principle, for that can do no more good than sermons. We need to be conscious of some fact in our nature that corresponds to this principle; we need to be aware of our unity with each other. Such a consciousness comes gradually as a result of studying the Theosophical teachings as to the nature of man and constantly striving to live up to them. We come to regard the impulses of personal desire as extraneous forces, parasitic to the real life; and to look for the dawn of a deeper consciousness in which the sense of solidarity shall be more palpable. Thus we acquire such a strong sense of the existence of the Soul that we are conscious of a feeling of resistance whenever we are impelled to

act contrary to its Law. In short the *Conscience* awakes. One in whom this sense is aroused no longer feels alone and apart. He feels that he cannot act in secret; he shares in common with others an interior Life — the Soul-Life; and this is so sacred, so important to his happiness, that he feels he can not violate it. Therefore he will not act unjustly, though he knows he may escape detection in the ordinary sense. For he feels that the omnipresent eye of the Soul knows and that his comrades will, in their inner consciousness, also know. The sense of guilt, the sense that he has violated the unspoken oath of a sacred freemasonry and so cut himself off from the ties of fellowship, will restrain him effectually.

Would it not be a blessed thing if we could awaken such a conscience, such a prescience of fellowship, among humanity at large; so that each and all would feel themselves linked in a sacred freemasonry which they dared not violate; and so that this conscience rested, not on the fear of an avenging Deity, or

anxiety for one's salvation, or on a maudlin religious sentimentalism, but on an actual knowledge of one's Divinity and of the oneness of humanity in Soul and Heart?

The establishment of a belief in Karma means all this and more. It means the revival of lost knowledge and the anchoring of morality upon a basis of experienced facts instead of leaving it dependent upon dogmatic or so-called "scientific" sanctions.

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## IV

### REINCARNATION

BY

A STUDENT

SECOND EDITION

The Aryan Theosophical Press  
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1910

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## PREFACE

**T**HE remarks under this head are intended to be introductory to each of the Manuals.

First, as to the spirit in which they are offered. These Manuals are not written in a controversial spirit, nor as an addition to the stock of theories awaiting public approval. The writers have no time to waste in arguing with people who do not wish to be convinced, or who ridicule everything which is new to their limited outlook. Their message is for those who desire to know — those who are seeking for something that will solve their doubts and remove their difficulties. For such, all that is needed is a clear exposition of the Theosophical teachings; for they will judge of the truth of a teaching by its power to answer the questions they ask. People realize, much more now than in the early days of the Theosophical Society, the value of Theosophy;

for the ever-increasing difficulties engendered by selfishness and materialism, by doubt and the multiplicity of theories, have created an urgent demand which it alone can satisfy.

Again, it is necessary to state clearly and emphatically the genuine teachings of Theosophy, as given by the Founder of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, and her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley. For, as H. P. Blavatsky predicted, there are persons who have sought to pervert these teachings and turn them into a source of profit to themselves and their own selfish and ambitious schemes. The true teachings do not lend themselves to such purposes; their ideals are of the purest and most unselfish. Hence these persons have sought to promulgate under the name of Theosophy a perverted form of the teachings, from which Brotherliness and other pure motives are omitted, and which contains doctrines which H. P. Blavatsky showed to be maleficent and destructive. As these pseudo-Theosophists have gained a certain amount of notoriety by using the names of the Theosophical Society and its Leaders, it is necessary to warn the public against them

## PREFACE



and their misrepresentations. Their teachings can easily be shown, by comparison, to be directly contrary to those of H. P. Blavatsky, whom they nevertheless profess to follow. Instead of having for their basis self-sacrifice, self-purification and the elevation of the human race, these teachings too often pander to ambition, vanity and curiosity. In many cases they are altogether ridiculous, and only calculated to make people laugh. Nevertheless, as these travesties have served to discredit the name of Theosophy and to keep earnest inquirers away from the truth, it is well that the public should know their nature and origin. They are the work of people who were at one time members of the Theosophical Society, but who did not find in it that food for their own personalities of which they were really in search. So they turned against their teachers in wounded pride and vanity, and started little societies of their own — with themselves at the head.

The writers of these Manuals have no personal grievance against any such calumniators. Inspired by a profound love of the sublime teachings of Theosophy, they have made it



their life-work to bring the benefits which they have thereby received within the reach of as many people as possible. And they feel that they will have the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the public in exposing folly and bringing the truth to light.

Theosophy strikes unfamiliar ground in modern civilization, because it does not come under any particular one of the familiar headings of Religion, Science, Philosophy, etc. into which our age has divided its speculative activities. It dates back to a period in the history of mankind when such distinctions did not exist, but there was one Gnosis or Knowledge embracing all. Religion and Science, as we have them today, are but imperfect growths springing from the remnants of that great ancient system, the Wisdom-Religion, which included all that we now know as religion and science, and much more. Hence Theosophy will not appeal to the same motives as religion and science. It will not offer any cheap and easy salvation or put a premium upon mental inactivity and spiritual selfishness. Neither can it accomodate itself to the rules laid down by various schools of modern thought as to

what constitutes proof and what does not. But it can and does appeal to the Reason. The truth of doctrines such as Theosophy maintains, can only be estimated by their ability to solve problems and by their harmony with other truths which we know to be true. But in addition to this we have the testimony of the ages, which has been too long neglected by modern scholarship, but which is now being revealed by archaeologists and scholars, as H. P. Blavatsky prophesied that it would in this century.

It may perhaps be as well also to remind those who would criticise, that the state of modern opinion is scarcely such as to warrant anybody in assuming the attitude of a judge. It would be quite proper for a Theosophist, instead of answering questions or attempting to give proofs, to demand that his questioners should first state their own case, and to be himself the questioner. The result would certainly show that Theosophy, to say the very least, stands on an equal footing with any other view, since there is no certain knowledge, no satisfying explanation, to be found anywhere.

Since the days when the wave of materialism swept over the world, obliterating the traces of the ancient Wisdom-Religion and replacing it by theological dogmatism our religions have had nothing to offer us in the way of a philosophical explanation of the laws of Being as revealed in Man and in Nature. Instead we have only had bare statements and dogmatic assertions. The higher nature of man is represented by such vague words as Spirit and Soul, which have little or no meaning for the majority. The laws of the universe are briefly summed up under the term "God," and all further consideration of them shut off. Then came a reaction against the dogmatism of religion, and man pinned his faith to knowledge gained by study and reflection, limiting his researches however to the outer world as presented by the senses, and fearing to trench upon the ground which dogmatic theology had rendered the field of so much contention. The result of this has been that neither in religions nor sciences, have we any teaching about the higher nature of man or the deeper mysteries of the universe. This is a field which is left entirely

unexplored, or is at best the subject of tentative and unguided conjectures.

Until, therefore, religious teachers have something definite, consistent, and satisfactory to offer, and until science can give us something better than mere confessions of nescience or impudent denials with regard to everything beyond its own domain, Theosophy can afford to assume the rôle of questioner rather than that of questioned, and does not *owe* anybody any explanations whatever. It is sufficient to state its tenets and let them vindicate themselves by their greater reasonableness; and any further explanation that may be offered is offered rather from goodwill than from any obligation.

Theosophy undertakes to explain that which other systems leave unexplained, and is, on its own special ground, without a competitor. It can issue a challenge to theology, science, and other modern systems, to surpass it in giving a rational explanation of the facts of life.

Again, there are some questions which it is beyond the reach of the human mind, in *its present stage of development*, to answer; and

it would scarcely be just to arraign Theosophy for not answering these.

Judgment should in all cases be preceded by careful study. There are always those who will impatiently rush to questions which a further study would have rendered unnecessary; and it is safe to say that the majority of "objections" raised to Theosophical teachings are such as could have been solved by the objector himself, had he been a genuine student. In the ordinary courses of education, scholars are required and are content, to accept provisionally many of the teacher's statements, in full confidence that further study will explain what in the beginning cannot be made clear. In the same spirit an earnest student of Theosophy will be wise enough to hold many of his difficulties in reserve, until, by further investigation, he has gained better acquaintance with his subject. In the case of those who are not willing to adopt these wise and patient methods of study, it may be reasonably questioned whether they are the more anxious to learn or to disprove.

Above all it is sought to make these Man-

uals such that they shall appeal to the heart and not *merely* to the head; that they shall be of practical service to the reader in the problems of his daily life, and not mere intellectual exercises. For there have been in past days books written by persons more distinguished for a certain grade of mental nimbleness than for heartfelt devotion to the cause of truth; and these have appealed only to those people who love intricate philosophical problems better than practical work. But as H. P. Blavatsky so frequently urged, the message of Theosophy is for suffering humanity; and the great Teachers, whose sole purpose is to bring to mankind the Light of Truth and the saving grace of real Brotherhood can have no interest in catering for the mental curiosity of merely a few well-to-do individuals. Even soulless men, said H. P. Blavatsky, can be brilliantly intellectual; but for those who are in earnest in their desire to reach the higher life intellectual fireworks alone will have little attraction. We intend, therefore, to keep the practical aspect of the teachings always to the front, and to show, as far as possible, that they are what

they claim to be — the gospel of a new hope and salvation for humanity.

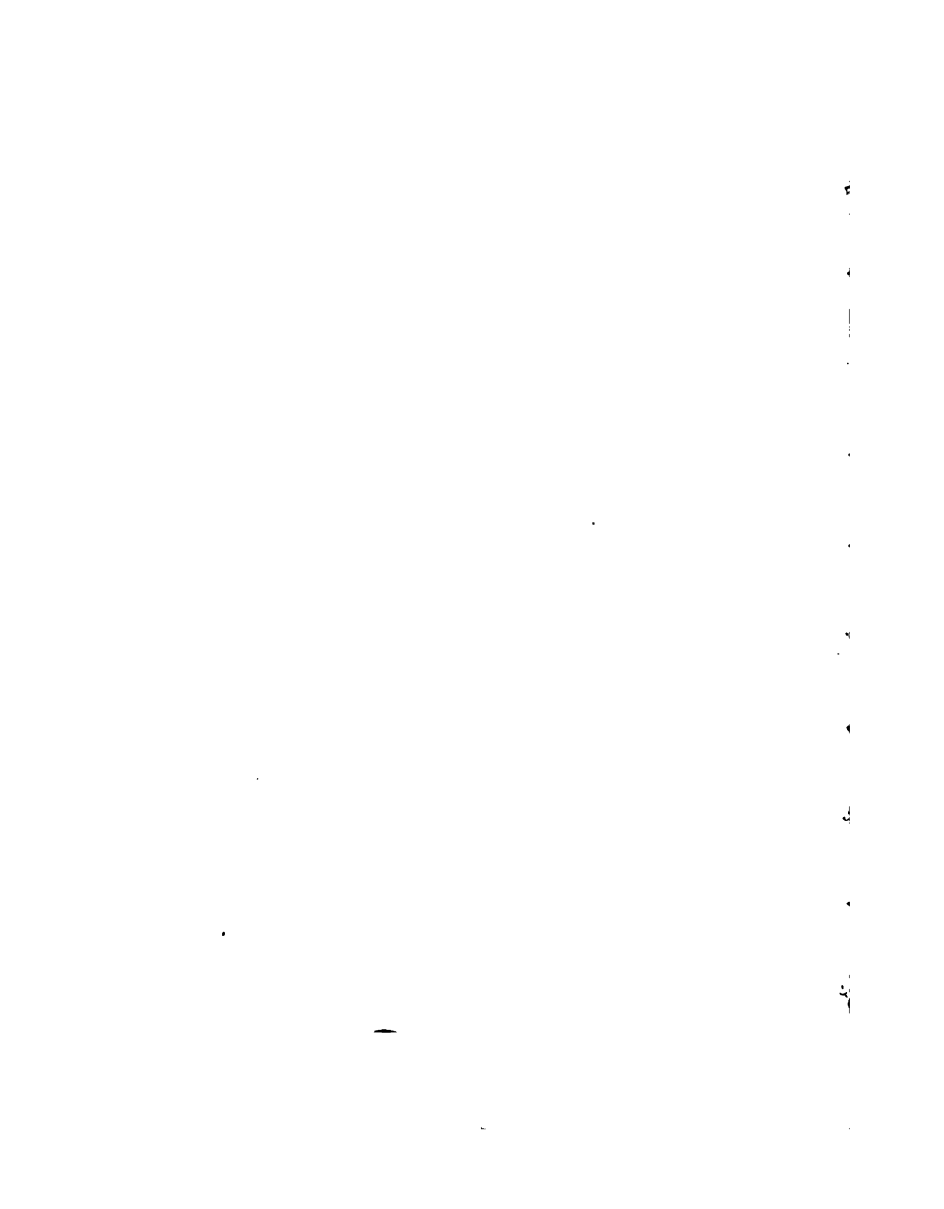
These Booklets are not all the product of a single pen, but are written by different Students at the International Headquarters of the **UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY** at Point Loma, California. Each writer has contributed his own quota to the series.

For further explanations on Theosophy generally, the reader is referred to the Book List published elsewhere in this volume and to the other Manuals of this series, which treat of Theosophy and the various Theosophical teachings.

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## INTRODUCTORY

**W**HEN an unfamiliar doctrine is presented to the world, one often hears the cry, Where are the proofs? It is not easy to guess what is meant by such a question, and one can only infer that it indicates a certain confusion of mind on the part of the questioner. It is probably the result of a habit which our minds have acquired in consequence of too much worship of the inductive method used, or claimed to be used, by modern science. But a great teaching concerned with the destinies of the human race may not be susceptible of the same kind of proof as a scientific theory. Nor again can it be proved like a problem in geometry.

Men do not usually in practice arrive at a conviction of the truth of a proposition either by inductive or deductive reasoning; they judge by its consistency, its ability to explain

facts, and its general air of being in harmony with other things which we know to be true. When a teaching is offered the question is not, How did you get it; by the inductive or the deductive method? — but, Is it true? Will it explain my problems? Is it in harmony with other things? And surely, the world is sick of theorizing and is only too ready to accept a teaching that will answer this test!

In this way the teaching of Reincarnation must be judged. It is, from the nature of the case, impossible to produce direct sensory evidence or testimony to the truth of such a doctrine; nor would a conviction resting upon such evidence alone be of much depth or value. We have not heard that the faith in immortality has benefited much by spiritualistic séances, or that the ideals of man have been elevated thereby; and the words of Jesus, "Neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," apply in this case.

The truth of Reincarnation must be judged by its reasonableness, its harmony with other things, and its ability to explain the facts of

life and to solve problems which no other theory can solve.

Further it is advisable to be warned against the impatience and hastiness of our mental habits in this superficial age; habits so incompatible with the care and patience required by a student of the deeper mysteries of life. Proof can never be given at the outset of a study; the pupil must be content to wait until he has faithfully followed the beginnings of the way, and trust that the conviction will come to him as he proceeds. Faith is necessary in all enterprises — not blind faith, but that faith which is the assurance of knowledge to come. It is this internal conviction of the truth of a doctrine that encourages us to proceed to that point where the conviction may become certainty.

Again, those who propound objections to Reincarnation usually overlook the fact that most of their objections apply with much greater force to the theories already held as to man's destiny. What "scientific" proof have we of the Christian doctrine of heaven

and hell? Could no objections be raised as to the justice, the reasonableness or the mercifulness of some of the beliefs professed in the religious world? What has science to offer in the way of a theory of man's destiny? Here are a few questions out of many which it would be well to have answered first, before proceeding further. It is usual in courts of justice to make the complainant first state his own case and prove the defendant's guilt, rather than to require the defendant to prove his own innocence; if the complainant has no case, judgment goes for the defendant by default. If this procedure should be adopted in the case of Reincarnation, it would certainly not be necessary for its advocates to plead anything in its defense. All they would have to do would be to request their assailants to state their own doctrines and to give satisfactory answers to any questions which might be proposed. What theory of the after-life is willing to come forward and stand such a test? So let it be understood that an explanation of the evidences

for Reincarnation is in reality a *concession* on the part of its advocates. They feel that while so many contradictory and unsatisfactory theories and so many doubts on the subject of the after-life exist in the world, they have a perfect right to present their theory without any explanation whatever and still stand on (at least) an equal footing with others.

Let those then, we would say, who purpose to call in question the truth of Reincarnation, first go carefully over the ground of existing theories, making quite sure what position they themselves intend to maintain in opposition to Reincarnation. Even if the result is inconclusive, it may very likely clear up the mind on some points that have hitherto been obscure.

Another point which should really be insisted on is that in a case like the present, judgment should be preceded by most careful study. In approaching a Theosophical teaching, one is called upon to take a serious view of things, and the usual hasty, slipshod methods of forming an opinion will not do. As

a rule we find people ready to discuss a new subject on the smallest possible acquaintance or on no acquaintance at all; the result being that endless time and breath are wasted in useless talk, the greater part of which would have been saved if the talkers had thought first and spoken afterwards. If we never criticised anything until we had made ourselves thoroughly familiar with it, how little argument we should indulge in! By far the greater part of the questions asked and objections raised by inquirers about Reincarnation are such as a little study would have solved. Hence the advocate of Reincarnation must needs for the most part confine himself to referring the inquirers to what has been written or to their own reflections. All teachers know how distressing it is to have pupils interrupt the lecture in order to ask questions which would be answered in due time without the asking. Such conduct evinces uncontrollable impatience and a lack of confidence in the teacher; who, as a matter of probability, knows better than the pupil what objections

are likely to occur. A modest questioner should realize that it is extremely improbable that he (unless a very wise man indeed) will think of any objection that has not also occurred to other minds. Hence he may expect to find that his questions have mostly been anticipated.

But such remarks as the above will be entirely superfluous in the case of the intelligent and well-balanced reader. For him it will be only necessary that the doctrine of Reincarnation be clearly set forth and the principal points in its favor indicated.

In treating of Reincarnation it will be necessary to presume some acquaintance on the reader's part with the teachings as to the Seven Principles of Man, the subject of a former Manual, and also with Theosophical teachings generally, especially those which tell of Evolution; and references to the other Manuals of this series will be made.

The Evolution of Man is but a part of the general scheme of cosmic evolution, and the teachings of Theosophy form such a consist-



ent whole that they are interwoven at every point and cannot be adequately treated one by one. For the same reason it is futile to attempt to judge of any one teaching, such as that of Reincarnation, by itself and apart from the other teachings. The doctrine of Reincarnation is possibly inconsistent with the *conventional* views put forward by modern religion, science and philosophy; hence it cannot be made to square with them, except in so far as they are true; and any failure to effect such a reconciliation should be set down to the discredit of conventional views — not to that of Reincarnation.

## I

### WHAT REINCARNATION IS

**T**HE doctrine of Reincarnation teaches that the eternal Soul of man — that is, the real Man — lives many successive lives on this earth, occupying every time a human form, and continually progressing toward perfection. It must be carefully distinguished from a certain teaching which often goes by the name of *Metempsychosis* or *Transmigration* and which holds that men incarnate in animal forms; for certain persons hostile to Theosophy have attempted to make people believe that Theosophy teaches this latter doctrine.

There is a natural tendency to think that the doctrine of Reincarnation means that our personality — Mr. Smith or Mrs. Jones — appears again and again on earth; and from this idea arises the common objection that we have no memory of earlier lives. It must therefore

be remarked that in the Theosophical teachings a broad distinction is made between the "personality" and the "individuality." The personality is regarded as an illusion, in a sense like that in which a dream is an illusion. This illusion is due to the fact that in our present imperfect state of development we mistake the mere attributes of the Self for the Self itself. But our personality is a bundle of changing moods, ideas and sentiments, and is not permanent. There is however a permanent factor in it, and this permanent factor gives us the feeling of separate individual existence and an intuition that at bottom we are immortal and eternal. This feeling of individuality proceeds from the Ego, the real eternal Self within. We cannot define it, because, in attempting to do so, we must strip it of all that we recognize as characterizing a mortal man. We must analyse our interior consciousness down to the point where there seems to the brain-mind to be nothing left.

Thus the Self is eternal, while all the attributes with which it is invested during earth-

life are impermanent. Consequently that which survives throughout the incarnations is a part of our Being so recondite that we should not recognize it as ourself; for all that we call "ourself" disappears at death. We might compare the eternal Self and its successive vestures with a string of beads; or better, with an actor who plays many parts. Macbeth knows nothing about Hamlet, but Irving knows about both and about himself as well. We are like actors so engrossed with our parts that we have temporarily lost sight of our real off-the-stage identity.

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the purpose of life and its successive incarnations is that the Soul — the real man — may profit. To our present ideas this may perhaps seem as if the Soul were *somebody else*, and we had no interest in the matter; but the Soul is to be sought within, for it is our veritable *Self*, though it cannot manifest itself as such until we have purified and clarified our nature from all illusive and extraneous elements. The mystery of the relation between the im-

mortal Self and the personality is one that can only be solved by much study and experience. Our religions say nothing of it, but the Buddhistic philosophy (not necessarily any modern Buddhist sect) goes deeply into the metaphysics of the subject, and so do many other ancient philosophies. Some light may be gleaned from the Manual in this series dealing with the Seven Principles of Man.

The duration of the interval between two successive lives is a question upon which but little information has been given by the Theosophical Teachers. Obviously there are many things which it is either impossible or imprudent to disclose to the world at present. The length of the Devachanic period must depend on the nature of the experiences which the Ego has to pass through in that state; and it may be short or measured by centuries. (See *Manual on Kâmaloka and Devachan.*)

## THE PURPOSE OF REINCARNATION

THE purpose of Reincarnation is that a perfect Man may be produced. We shall understand better if we consider the processes of Life and Evolution *as a whole*, and not as applied to the case of Man particularly. Life consists of a twofold process, of which modern science studies only one half; the processes of Involution and Evolution. Science studies only the *evolution* of forms or organisms upwards from the lower types to the higher. But obviously there can be no such evolution without the operation of a vital or spiritual force, which, descending *from above*, enters these forms and causes them to expand and develop. This latter process is called Involution. To take an analogy from physical science,—consider a piece of ice. It turns to water and then to gas, and the gas may be heated and made to glow with light. But there is no energy in the ice which will accomplish this change unaided. There needs to be an infusion of something which the scientists have

called "heat." In the same way nothing will evolve unless something enters it from a higher plane. Animals will remain animals; and savages, savages.

Applying this principle now to the case of Man, we see that his development requires the interaction of the same pair of forces. In order that his body, his mind and his character may develop and grow upwards, there must be a descent of an informing Spirit from above. And here our analogy from physics will help us again. When the ice is turned into water and the water into steam, in both cases heat disappears from its manifested form and becomes latent. The *raising* of matter from a lower state to a higher was accompanied by a *lowering* of the heat principle from a higher temperature to a lower. In the same way the immortal Spirit which informs Man *descends* and, by lowering itself, raises him. Herein is the *sacrifice* which the Christ makes for Man.

This leads immediately to the question,—  
What is it that reincarnates?

**WHAT IS IT THAT REINCARNATES?**

CLEARLY the nature of Man must for this purpose be regarded as dual — a reincarnating entity, and entities in which the former incarnates, or which are produced by its incarnation. The incarnating entity is that immortal Spirit which is the cause of man's evolution, and the entities in which it incarnates are the successive personalities which arise from its contact with earth-life. The reincarnating entity is immortal, and is the real Man, for whose purposes the reincarnations are experienced; but the successive personalities are transitory and unreal.

We must not, however, expect to be able to define the truth about such a teaching in narrow and simple terms; for, like all questions concerning nature and life, it is complex and vast. We can only speak in approximate terms. A reference to the teachings as to the Seven Principles of Man (dealt with in another Manual) will be advisable. For the moment we may recall that the "Higher



Triad" is composed of the three principles Ātmâ, Buddhi, and Manas (more correctly the higher part of Manas). H. P. Blavatsky says that that which incarnates is the Manas joined to Buddhi and Ātmâ. It is

The spiritual thinking Ego, the permanent principle in man, or that which is the seat of Manas. It is not Ātmâ, or even Ātmâ-Buddhi, regarded as the dual monad, that is the individual or divine man; but Manas. For Ātmâ is the Universal All, and becomes the Higher Self of man only in conjunction with Buddhi, its vehicle, which links it to the individuality or divine man.

And again:

Manas . . . is the real Individuality, or the divine man. It is this Ego which, having originally incarnated in the senseless human form . . . made of that human form *a real man*. It is this Ego, this "Causal Body," which overshadows every personality into which Karma forces it to reincarnate. — *Key to Theosophy*, chap. viii.


And William Q. Judge says:

Manas, Buddhi and Ātmâ, who are the real man . . . are attracted back to earth for reincarnation. They are the immortal part of us; they, in fact, and no other, are we.

It will be convenient, for present purposes, to call the incarnating entity the Ego; also, in Theosophy, the term Individuality is often applied to the real man, in contradistinction to the term personality, which is applied to the transitory self of a single earth-life.

The above teaching implies that we are not aware of our real Life, but are living in a kind of dream or illusion, during which we become so wrapped up in our thoughts and imaginations that we acquire a sort of false personality, like a person in a nightmare. So the saying, *Vita est somnium*, is not so untrue after all. But the real Life is no dream; and it is of this Life that one speaks when he declares, "Life is Joy!" For verily Life, in its purity and reality, is synonymous with joy, and it is only when we stand in the shadow of our own personality that the glorious tide fails us and we are sad.

The error by which we mistake the mere accidents and attributes of the Self for the Self itself, is one that is explained in Eastern philosophies, but we shall scarcely find words in



our own unphilosophical language to expound it adequately.

We know, however, by experience, that the personality is constantly changing, even within the limits of a single life; and that however much the grouping of ideas and beliefs may vary, the sense of individuality persists throughout all and we still call it "ourself." The sense of individuality is the only thing that does not change; it is the center, and it arises from the Ego.

The personal ends and aims which we set before ourselves are continually thwarted — alas! is it not the theme of the disillusioned mortal from time immemorial? "The vanity of human wishes," and so on! But what is the reason? It is because those ends and aims are not the purposes of the Ego; they are the whims of the lower mind. Like a wayward child, or a pig driven to market, we blunder from side to side and chase butterflies or dawdle to browse, while the Master who holds the lines as constantly pulls us up with a jerk. We have to learn to find out what is the pur-

pose of the Ego — our own real purpose — and concur with it instead of thwarting it.

“God moves in a mysterious way” and “knows what is best for us in his inscrutable wisdom,” and so on. But he does not forbid us from trying to learn his wisdom so that it may be less inscrutable. And then this God is not an extraneous personality, but Man’s real Self. Ultimately it is our destiny to become identified with It, so that its will is our will and its knowledge our knowledge. This is the mystic union between the lower mind and its divine counterpart, the “finding of Christ.”

#### PROCESS OF REINCARNATION

In speaking of Evolution (see Manual on the Seven Principles and in other Theosophical writings) it was said that *Ātmā-Buddhi* is the eternal omnipresent seed of Life in every atom of the universe; but that while being the cause of all life, growth and evolution, It exists in all the lower kingdoms of nature in a latent or unmanifested state. It

gives rise to all the phenomena which chemist and physicist study in the mineral kingdom, and to the lower forms of instinct and intelligence which are manifested in the plant and animal kingdoms. It is only in Man that this latent spark reaches its fuller unfoldment; and that was brought about by the coming of the *Mānasaputras* or "Sons of Mind," progressed Beings from another plane, who had been through the stages of human evolution before (in a preceding *Manvantara*). These beings endowed Man with Manas, thus enabling him to have a link with Ātmā-Buddhi, giving him immortality, and the divine knowledge, and the potentiality of all divine power. Previous to this ensoulment, Man was simply a highly developed human animal, without the knowledge of good and evil and the power of choice. This is what is symbolized in the Bible and other sacred allegories. Ever after this ensoulment the history of Man is one of gradual improvement, as the power of the Higher Self gradually makes itself felt and he grows in experience and self-control. But

the process is long and, like every other process in nature, it is divided into alternating periods. These alternations are the succession of life and death. At the death of the body, the Soul lays down for a time its work (just as we lay down our work during sleep), and enters into a condition or sphere of existence in which it lives its own appropriate life as a spiritual being — a state answering to our "Heaven." After a period of rest in this state or *Devachan*, the hour strikes for the Ego to re-enter bodily life and a new incarnation begins. It is drawn back by the unsatisfied aspirations and unfulfilled duties and purposes of earth-life; and entering the sphere of generation is born again with the developing embryo. But the subject here borders upon the question of man's state before and after death, so we must refer the reader to the Manuals on those subjects.

## II

### ARGUMENTS FOR REINCARNATION

**I**T must be borne in mind that a doctrine is to be accepted for its truth and not for its convenience; and therefore that these arguments are not put forward to induce people to adopt Reincarnation as a comfortable belief, but to confirm the truth of the doctrine by showing how it reconciles all contradictions, explains all difficulties, and harmonizes with those facts of life which experience compels us to accept as facts.

In the first place Reincarnation is the only doctrine which reconciles the conclusions which we are forced to draw from the facts of life with the notions which we are bound to entertain as to divine law, justice, and mercy. Under all other theories these two have been irreconcilable. It has been the strenuous life-work of countless thinkers to try to present some


formula which shall achieve an acceptable adjustment between our spiritual intuitions and our scientific and theological ideas, and to preserve faith in God and religion amid the unsettling tendencies of an age of inquiry. But, to do this, they have always had to leave a large part of the problem unsolved otherwise than by the general formula, "God's inscrutable Will." For instance, how can we account for the inequality of man's opportunities and circumstances on entering this life? Current theology affords no other explanation than that this is the will of Providence; but, as we are enjoined to strive to know God's will and mind, it is certainly as much a duty as a necessity that we should understand more about this particular problem. Science can tell us no more about it, and merely uses, in place of the divine will, other phrases which amount to about as much as using ABC instead of XYZ in an equation. But Reincarnation shows us that birth is not the beginning of Life, but only a point in the middle; and that we take up our life where we laid it down. Hence each



man's circumstances are the outcome of his former living. Here we have at once a satisfactory explanation of a vexed problem; and a doctrine which can explain a problem that no other doctrine can explain must surely be worth further consideration. When we find that the same key unlocks many other doors as well, we shall have good reason for believing that it is the master-key. The subject of individual merit and recompense is treated more fully under its more particular heading, the doctrine of Karma.

Take next the problem of what happens to a man after death. He leaves this life with all his work unfinished and a host of unsatisfied desires and unachieved purposes. What is to become of these? Is he, after such a fragmentary day's work, to disappear forever from the earth, where these things were begun and where alone they can be finished? Will any heaven, however blissful, afford him the opportunities for making good what he has left imperfect, for assimilating the lessons which life has taught him, for correcting mistakes, and

so on? We speak not now of the old hard-and-fast doctrine of heaven and hell, for it has been sufficiently derided and denounced by others. Its injustice, improbability and absurdity are too apparent to satisfy any thinking mind. We speak merely of the various hypotheses and modified doctrines which have taken its place. But these rest on no authority, and are so many attempts to reconcile established belief with probability. Here again the doctrine of Reincarnation shows us how man returns to continue the work he has left unfinished, to repair mistakes, to learn new lessons, to achieve new heights, to become a more perfect image of his Immortal Self. And, as shown elsewhere, no one may claim enough knowledge of God's nature and will to justify him in asserting that Reincarnation is contrary to them. God is great enough to tower above all the science and philosophy that man can formulate, and we do not fear that by using our wits we shall ever dethrone him or expose his secrets. What if Reincarnation should cast down some few tribal gods or



graven images of the human fancy; will that affect the majesty of the All-Father?

Our present life is neither a beginning nor an end, but a middle. All analogy helps us to this conclusion. There is a strict analogy between a day of our life and an incarnation. A day is incomplete, but causes set in motion one day and unfulfilled then may be fulfilled another day; and what we have begun before may be finished, and what we have not finished may be completed another day. Days are separated from each other by intervals during which we are in a different state of consciousness, the bodily life ebbs, and the mind passes to spheres of which we have little or no recollection when we awake, but throughout which the identity is preserved. The sleep refreshes the indwelling spirit and gives it new strength to take up its task of using the body and faculties. Have not writers of all times and places compared death to sleep? And let us remark in passing, that as sleep is pleasant beyond compare, it is absurd to fear death, the greater sleep. Children may not like to

go to bed, and may be afraid of the dark; but they do not fear sleep or imagine that they will never wake up again.

All nature is built on a plan of ebb and flow. As day succeeds day, with intervening nights, so season succeeds season, and the trees die and blossom again. The tides ebb and flow; the moon waxes and wanes. There is not a corner of the earth into which we may look and not find these successive alternations. The life of man, as imagined by conventional belief, exhibits a glaring contrast with all its surroundings, and stands out as the monumental instance of fatuity and incapacity on the part of the caricature of a deity who is so irreverently supposed to have designed it. No truly scientific brain could look at a single earth-life and not pronounce with certainty that it is but a fragment of a whole; so unmistakably are the missing parts forthshadowed in the part that is seen.

One step toward the belief in Reincarnation is the belief in the pre-existence of the Soul before birth. It has always been difficult in

the minds of reasonable people to reconcile themselves with the notion that a Soul can be immortal at one end only. A line infinite in one direction but terminated in the other direction is *a line with one end* — a geometrical conception calculated to make Euclid turn in his sarcophagus! To be immortal the Soul must have pre-existed. This conviction of pre-existence, both as a sentiment and an inference, is very common among our great writers. But with any other theory than Reincarnation, the idea of pre-existence becomes as difficult to understand as the idea of post-existence; especially in its relation with our present earth-life. If the Soul were never on earth before, and is not to be on earth again, our earth-life becomes reduced to an episode as brief as it is utterly purposeless.

### III

#### SUPPOSED OBJECTIONS TO REINCARNATION

**T**HE most familiar of all the alleged objections to Reincarnation is one that occurs instantly to the most rudimentary intelligence; but people of maturer judgment realize that such an objection must surely have occurred to Theosophists before, and must therefore have an easy solution. It is the question, "Why do we not remember our past lives?" wherein is implied the conclusion that as we do not remember them, we did not have any past lives. The Theosophist will at once refuse to admit that the mere fact of not remembering a thing is proof that it never happened; and so the argument falls to the ground at once. We do not remember our past lives; therefore we either

may or may not have lived before. That is the whole argument, and very little it means.

But it is by no means correct to say that we do not remember our past lives. Memory is a complicated faculty, and there is more than one kind of memory. We retain no detailed or pictorial memory of the events of our past lives, it is true; but nevertheless we possess memory of another kind. This other kind of memory exists in the form of innate ideas, instincts, proclivities, intuitions, and the like; and every man comes into the world plentifully endowed with his own peculiar combination of these. These are the memories of past births, treasured in the back of the mind, deeply ingrained in the nature, though not presenting themselves to the pictorial memory as the result of definite events. And little is it to be wondered that we do not remember the details of our past lives; but the fault is surely our own and not anyone else's. For what attention have we ever given to the cultivation of memory? Do we not allow our minds to remain in a state of loose control,

the ideas and impressions coming and going much as they please? Memory is a faculty that needs cultivation; those who have tried it know that the faculty can be cultivated to the most extraordinary degree and in fact without limit. But, as it is, we do not even remember things that happened in this life. How shall we then remember the things that happened centuries ago, and that in another body with another brain, and separated from our present life by the chasm of bodily death? Certainly it is not impossible that a man should be able to recall his past lives; but obviously he must first have learned how to sound the depths of his mind to regions beyond those to which ordinary thought extends; for the record of that past inheres, not in the cells of the present brain nor in any part of the mind which the man recognizes as forming part of his present personality, but in strata of the interior nature which lie deeper; in the consciousness of the reincarnating Ego, which alone endures throughout the chain of lives. To bring back that memory, then, we



should need to have gained a knowledge and mastery over our faculties such as no ordinary man can boast; we should need to have attained to freedom from the delusions which selfishness and desire engender in the mind, and to have curbed and bridled that froward steed, the mind, so that at will we could direct its operations. Such knowledge and power comes to one only after perfection in the study of Râja Yoga, self-mastery.

But a question will arise as to the *justice* and *expediency* of this dispensation by virtue of which we forget our past. The answer to this is simply that it would not be of service for a man to remember his past. We have as much — nay, more, in the experiences of one life, than we can readily assimilate; often we are almost overwhelmed even by that. If we had in addition the memory of countless past experiences, the confusion and the burden would be more than we could bear. Usually a man can make better headway by letting bygones be bygones and concentrating his efforts on the present duty; his reflections

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hinder him very much. How often do we, in this life, wish we could wipe out the past and begin again!

It is argued that it is unjust to punish a man for acts which were virtually committed by someone else; but we should remember that whatever theory of life we may hold, the same question arises. If we believe in the ordinary theories of heredity, then we suffer for our ancestors' sins. If Reincarnation is unjust in this respect, it is at least less unjust than any other explanation. Then again, as said before, the life is the Soul's, and the real Man is conscious throughout; and it rests with ourselves how far we will succeed in attaining to the knowledge of the Soul or how long we will remain in ignorance. It might also be shown that we so habitually suffer through the faults of others that a special case of vicarious suffering would be of no account; or that our personality is so constantly changing that the man who suffers is never quite the same man as he who sinned. Again, we must not forget that recompense consists

of reward as well as of penalty; and that we are not apt to be so particular as to the justice of our rewards! In short it is evident that the question only requires a little solid thought, and many solutions will occur. The forgetfulness of past lives is both fortunate and equitable — for natures still wandering in the halls of illusion. Recollection and full knowledge are attainable — *when we are worthy and fitted for them and able to take them.*

The cases in which very young children evince a memory of having lived before are very numerous; but they are usually discredited by parents and the child is snubbed. He soon learns to dismiss these pictures and the strong light of his present life blots them out. But among Theosophists, who are ready to recognize such manifestations, the cases of memory in children are by no means rare.

It is only natural that considering the vanity and weakness of humanity, there should occasionally be found persons who claim to know who they were in their past lives. The characters chosen by them are of course the great

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figures of history, such as Napoleon, and Mary Queen of Scots; but there are too many competing candidates for the same characters. Vanity is the greatest foe of genuine attainment; and anyone sufficiently advanced to have a genuine knowledge would certainly not air it in this way. There are many ways in which the mind can become so imbued with the character of someone else — such as by reading about him or enacting him on the stage — and the mere fact of having such an experience does not prove that it is a recollection. If the picture of our past life should come before us, we would have but poor means of recognizing it as such, of knowing whether it was our own past or someone else's, or whether it was a mere dream, or the glimpse of pictures in the records of the astral light. The possibilities of deception are almost infinite for one *not specially trained*.

Another class of objection is as follows: "I am sure I do not want to come back to this earth again; one life is enough for me." This is very shallow; the same person per-

haps, in other moments, repines over the shortness of life and shudders at the idea of being cut off in the midst of its enjoyments. Such ejaculations are not the results of serious reflection; they are the utterances of passing moods. The weary toiler feels, as he goes to rest at night, that he could never face another day. The sea-sick passenger vows he will never undertake another voyage. The petulant child does not want to go to school. Despondent moods may last a minute, a day, a year, several years; but they are temporary. What does it take to heal them? A night's rest, a holiday, a little flattery, a cup of tea—and lo! life is a glorious thing, a heroic battle, a song of joy. Who then can estimate the recuperative effect of the greater sleep, when the Soul lays aside body, mind, and all its burdens, till it re-enters life with the freshness of the infant?

And as to heaven, what do we know about that? There is no ideal of heaven so perfect, reasonable, just and blissful as that of Devachan, the Soul's abode after death. No ideas

of harps, not even the most glowing imaginations of the most refined religious minds, can approach the reality of that bliss. And eternity? A century would outrun most of our ideas of eternity. Eternity is a mere word. People who find the teachings of Theosophy too big for them have no business to be talking about eternity. People who get tired of one earth-life would soon tire of eternity; a modified eternity, consisting of a long while with another long while added to it, would probably suffice.

The idea of Reincarnation may excite reluctance in the hearts of those endeared to the Christian ideas of eternal bliss. But we assure them that this is only due to an inadequate conception of the doctrine of Reincarnation. A flippant way of dealing with the subject may blind our eyes to its real import and meaning; but serious reflection will convince us that there is enough in it to satisfy the most ardent aspirations and the most reverent heart.

We must refer the reader to the Manual on *Kâmaloka and Devachan* for further descrip-

tion of this state of bliss, simply remarking here that as described by H. P. Blavatsky, it exceeds the most ideal states conceived of by Christian thought. We are better off in the hands of the eternal Law than we should be if left to the fulfilment of our own hopes and notions of bliss after death.

And as to the other state — eternal punishment — it is surely unnecessary to dwell on the hideousness of that doctrine. It is entirely done away with in Theosophy, which regards the life on earth as quite sufficient tribulation for the Soul, and can picture no worse state after death. We simply give the following quotations from H. P. Blavatsky.

The only state the Spiritual Self knows of hereafter is that of unalloyed bliss. . . . We believe in no hell or paradise as localities; in no objective hell-fires and worms that never die, nor in any Jerusalem with streets paved with sapphires and diamonds. . . . We believe in an immutable law of absolute Love, Justice, and Mercy. . . . The same unerringly wise and just, rather than merciful, Law which inflicts upon the incarnated Ego the karmic punishment for every sin committed during the preceding

life on earth, has provided for the now disembodied Entity a long lease of mental rest, and the entire oblivion of every sad event, aye, to the smallest painful thought that took place in its last life as a personality, leaving in the soul-memory nothing but the reminiscences of that which was bliss or which led to happiness.—*The Key to Theosophy*, chap. viii.

As to the ordinary mortal, his bliss in Devachan is complete. It is an *absolute* oblivion of all that gave it pain or sorrow in the past incarnation, and even oblivion of the fact that such things as pain and sorrow exist at all. The *Devachani* lives its intermediate cycle between two incarnations surrounded by everything it had aspired to in vain, and in the companionship of everyone it loved on earth. It has reached the fulfilment of all its soul-yearnings. And thus it lives throughout long centuries an existence of *unalloyed* happiness, which is the reward for its sufferings in earth-life. In short, it bathes in a sea of uninterrupted felicity spanned only by events of still greater felicity in degree.—*The Key to Theosophy*, chap. ix.

In other passages, which we have not space to quote, H. P. Blavatsky speaks of the conditions of man after death as eminently merciful and consoling besides being absolutely just; and speaks in strong condemnation of the



terrible doctrines professed by some who call themselves followers of Christ, according to which the pains of this life are succeeded by even worse sufferings for endless time, or at best by a wholly inadequate and little coveted reward in "heaven." The fact is that the Law treats us a very great deal better than we treat ourselves, and the decrees of Eternal Justice are infinitely wiser and kinder than those which we so falsely attribute to It.

Centuries of mental servitude and spiritual blindness under the rule of bigotry and superstition, followed by a reaction to an equally superstitious extreme of scientific scepticism, have deprived the human breast of that joy of life, that trust in eternal justice, that feeling of dignity, which are the proper attributes of a divinely inspired being such as Man is. We have acquired an altogether flippant and disparaging way of regarding teachings, which is little wonder when one considers the kind of teachings we have been fed on. Of our own religious teachings as to heaven and hell we are accustomed to make fun. We talk

about the soul and its future in an airy way, when we have not the faintest conception of what is meant by any other condition of existence than our familiar daily one. Our notions as to what Deity is preparing for us in the next life are for the most part childish and petty to a degree that insults both ourselves and Deity. The idea that there can be anything in the teachings of Reincarnation to call for flippant treatment is equally regrettable. Deprived by death of our foolish delusions, we shall stand forth in our awful dignity as Souls; and no conceptions which mortal words can paint will suffice to give an idea of the bliss and holiness of that state.

## IV

### REINCARNATION AND HEREDITY

**I**T is sometimes said that our being born with ready-formed characters should not be counted as an argument for Reincarnation, because (so it is said) heredity explains that fact. But the word "heredity," as oftenest used, means simply "the fact that we inherit"; that is, it is only a statement of certain phenomena, not an explanation of them. If the word is ever used, in addition to this usage, to denote some cause or agent which may be presumed to occasion or determine the phenomena, such meaning should be most carefully distinguished from the former meaning. This distinction, however, is one that is frequently ignored, not only in this case but in many others; as, for instance, where the process of gravitation is confused with the cause of gravitation, or the phenomena of vitality

with the vital principle itself. Hence, in dealing with the present question, we are dealing with a particular case of a common fallacy, the fallacy of confounding the effect with the cause, or of supposing that a concise and generalized statement of certain phenomena is equivalent to an explanation of their cause. Students of Theosophy, however, must be prepared to give up to some extent the crude and careless modes of thought tolerated among those who are in truth but the camp-followers of science, all untrained as they are in those pursuits by which the faculties of a clear and well-kept mind are brought to bear on the wide range of questions which interest educated people.

Such dabblers, knowing nothing of abstract thought and unable to reason clearly, have found a field in which they can distinguish themselves among others of their kind by a show of cleverness that demands (as they flatter themselves) no knowledge of the laws of formal logic; and they commit blunders from which a lesson or two in Jevons' *Ele-*

*mentary Logic* might, had they ever heard of it, have saved them.

We will not, then, waste any more time in discussing the question whether a concise and generalized statement of the facts of heredity is or is not an explanation of their cause. Assuming for the present that it is not, we shall proceed to the further question whether science does know of anything, under the name of heredity or under any other name, that can rank as a possible cause or determinant of the phenomena of heredity. And in the first place we remark that science is forced, by its declared materialistic position, to seek its causes in the same place as it finds its effects, that is on the plane of physical matter. This circumstance alone would settle the question in the negative for a Theosophist, who holds that the causes of material phenomena are not themselves material. Scientists, however, ingeniously evade the difficulty by loading the whole burden of causation upon the shoulders of *something* which is at once ideal enough to serve as a cause and material enough to "save

their (materialistic) face" — something which they have conceived in the matrix of the "scientific imagination," and which, like a dutiful offspring, will obey all the laws imposed upon it by the heredity of its parents — a *provisional hypothesis*, in short, put in like a scaffolding to hold up the facts while something more permanent is being sought. This something is of course our old friend the ATOM, sometimes however in this case dressed up anew as the GERM-PLASM or the CELL. The parent transmits to his offspring a Cell, an Atom, or a Germ-plasm. Whether or not there has been discovered anything, which in the case of parents with several children, determines the allotment of the cells, which cell to which child, we do not know; but we do not much care whether this endless chain of physical causes contains one link or a hundred so long as it fails to lead anywhere.

To dismiss the matter, it is clear that the cell or any other materialistic hypothesis is but a subterfuge for the truth, and that the real causes must be sought, postpone the

search how we may, in realms beyond the physical. That is to say, that the more scientific explanations are true, the more they need the Theosophical explanation to explain them; and we can only be grateful to scientists if they succeed in filling in any of the gaps between cause and effect, and will please refrain from denying the existence of things which according to their own admission, belong to other departments; and from seeking for things, which they are not looking for, in a world where they do not expect to find them.

It is the Will of the Ego, conditioned by the requirements of Eternal Law and by the necessities created in past lives, that directs the incarnating Soul to the parentage best adapted to those requirements. It is this Will which determines to what extent the Soul shall modify its instrument or be modified by it. Cells, matrix, seed and all are instruments in the hands of the Being that is using them; and while science is studying the process and trying to believe that it works itself, Theosophists are studying the operator.

If a final word is necessary, it is to assure the genuine votaries of Science — those who sincerely and candidly follow the avowed principles of their noble cult — that the above strictures are intended for such only as the cap happens to fit; and we are sure they, the genuine votaries, will welcome anything that tends to relieve them from the burden of a disparaging association with those who purvey fraudulent imitations of their goods. We can sympathize with them.



## V

### REINCARNATION IN ANTIQUITY

**R**EINCARNATION has been well called the favorite belief of mankind, inasmuch as it has always been, and now is, the belief of the majority. Later events and discoveries, it may here be remarked, have taught us to pay more regard to the abilities both of the ancients and of the modern Orientals than we were formerly wont to do; and we may therefore estimate their opinion as worthy of consideration. It is in fact only in later times and in Western lands that the belief in — or rather the knowledge of — Reincarnation has waned; and even this waning is but a temporary phase marking a decline of spirituality and a wave of materialism.

Hinduism and Buddhism are of course known to be inspired throughout by the teaching of Reincarnation, and it is neither


necessary nor practicable to digress into quotations from these sources. But once again the student is reminded not to misunderstand the symbolism which is often used, nor to adopt the misunderstandings of the ignorant for whom religion is always a superstition. The use of animal symbols to denote various rôles or conditions of the soul is very common. We do not believe that Buddha died through a surfeit of pork, though he is said to have died from eating too much "hog's flesh"; nor do we imagine that Jesus was ever a lamb or a vine. In the same way, when it is said that a rapacious man will become a tiger, or a gluttonous one a pig, nothing more is meant than that in his next (human) birth he will be afflicted with the corresponding propensities. There was also a teaching that after a man had died and his Soul passed to Devachan, the elements that entered into his *kâma-rûpa* or "animal soul" would, after their disintegration, enter into the structure of animals. But this is no more than saying that the particles of our

body will afford food to the worms, and is no more warrant for a belief in animal transmigration than the fact about the worms is warrant for a belief that we shall be worms in our next life. Whether or not there are any grossly ignorant and superstitious coolies who believe such doctrines does not concern the beliefs of the intelligent, whether in the East or the West.

In ancient Egypt Reincarnation was taught, but to the multitude it was not fully given out; this accounts for the misunderstandings of those archaeologists who have mistaken the exoteric for the esoteric teachings. Here again we find also the symbolical teachings as to the destiny of the various principles of man after disintegration; for the Egyptians recognized seven principles as do the Theosophists. These teachings must not be confused with the doctrine of Reincarnation as applied to the case of the immortal Soul. The latter doctrine was fully understood, but the doctrine was taught only in the Sacred Schools and given to the multitude in veiled language.

The Egyptians communicated some of their knowledge to the Greeks, and certain great Greek philosophers were initiated by the Egyptian priests. Plato's *Phaedrus* is a description of the career of the immortal part of man and its relation to its earthly tenements, couched in Greek modes of expression. The Neo-Platonists of Alexandria also taught Reincarnation. Plotinus says:

The soul, though of divine origin, and proceeding from the regions on high, becomes merged in the dark receptacle of the body, and being naturally a posterior god, it descends hither through a certain voluntary inclination, for the sake of power and of adorning inferior concerns. By this means it receives a knowledge of its latent powers, and exhibits a variety of operations peculiar to its nature, which by perpetually abiding in an incorporeal habit, and never proceeding into energy, would have been bestowed in vain. . . . Through an abundance of desire the soul becomes profoundly merged into matter, and no longer totally abides with the universal soul. Yet our souls are able alternately to rise from hence, carrying back with them an experience of what they have known and suffered in their fallen state; and whence they will learn how



blessed it is to abide in the intelligible world, and by a comparison, as it were, of contraries, will more plainly perceive the excellence of a superior state. For the experience of evil produces a clearer knowledge of good. This is accomplished in our souls according to the circulations of time, in which a conversion takes place from subordinate to more exalted natures.

In the early days of the Christian era there were Schools which sought to preserve the ancient *Gnosis* and the teachings of the Sacred Mysteries throughout the rising tide of materialism and corruption. The Gnostics and the Essenes were two of these Schools. They admittedly had esoteric teachings for the initiated and exoteric teachings for the multitude. Many of the Church Fathers taught Reincarnation as a doctrine of Christianity; and it continued to be an essential part of Christian philosophy until the growth of Western influences caused it to be expunged from the canon. Justin Martyr speaks of the soul inhabiting more than one human body; but also says that very evil souls are punished by being incarnated in beasts.

Origen advocated the teaching most strongly. He says:

If our course be not marked out according to our works before this life, how is it true that it is not unjust in God that the elder should serve the younger and be hated, before he had done things deserving of servitude and of hatred?

Many other writers of the early Church also held views favorable to Reincarnation; but at the Council of Constantinople, in the year 551, the teaching was condemned and removed from the canon of the Church. Needless to point out, a teaching which upholds man's divinity and responsibility was a thorn in the side of those influences which sought to establish a system of ecclesiastical jurisdiction based on the priestly office of intercession, and on the doctrine of original sin removable by vicarious atonement.

If we ask why modern Christianity does not teach Reincarnation, the answer is that modern Christianity has been specially edited so as not to teach it. The books constituting the Bible are a selection; some of those re-

jected as "apocryphal" teach Reincarnation, e. g., the "Book of Wisdom." St. Augustine says:

The very thing which is now called the "Christian" religion really was known to the ancients, nor was it wanting at any time from the beginnings of the human race up to the time Christ came in the flesh; from which time the true religion, which had previously existed, began to be called Christian, and this in our days is the Christian religion, not as having been wanting in former times, but as having in later times received that name.—(*Opera*, I, 12)

The esoteric teachings of Christ—those which he gave to his disciples—have not come down to us. If ever recorded they were suppressed and afterwards lost. We have only a few of the parables and ethical teachings which he gave to the multitude;\*

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\* There are however not a few passages in the *Logia* of Jesus which point clearly to the real esoteric teachings. For instance:

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth for ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.—*John*, viii. 32-36.

and to these have been added gleanings from Paganism, Neo-Platonism, etc., and a pile of dogmas accumulated by the ecclesiasticism of subsequent centuries. But we have no philosophical teachings as the Oriental religions have. Hence Reincarnation is not specially taught in modern Christianity. It is this fact which, among others of a similar nature, explains why modern Christianity is so powerless in the face of present-day human problems, and why it derives strength from the natural intuition of the human heart, rather than gives strength.



## VI

### REINCARNATION THE MASTER-KEY FOR MODERN PROBLEMS

**I**T is impossible to over-estimate the effect which a belief in Reincarnation is destined to produce in modern thought. We have the inner conviction of our immortality and solidarity, but our reason, instead of reinforcing this conviction, contradicts it, because that reason has been fed on such false teachings. If, on the contrary, the reason were to confirm and explain the inner voice, our faculties would combine towards the same end instead of neutralizing each other.

The vague profession of a belief in immortality is a very different thing from a conviction of it, and there are all degrees and ~~stages~~ between the two. The teachings of ~~theosophy~~ can turn our professed beliefs

into convictions strong enough to affect our ideas and conduct; and the process is one of gradual growth. Students of Theosophy, who have sought to make its teachings the guiding rules of their daily lives, gradually acquire a new way of regarding life which affects all their views and actions. A sense of the plenitude of time grows up in them and enables them to act as beings with an eternal past stretching behind them and an eternal future before. The feeling that every effort counts and that it is never too late to begin an enterprise inspires them with a new energy. Most important of all, the sentiment of hope is revived; for, while the anthology of our modern literature breathes throughout a note of despair at untimely death, faded hopes ("never to return — alas!"), and unrealized aspirations, the Theosophist knows that all ebbs are but temporary and must be followed by renewed flows. To him death is but an episode; the fading of youthful enthusiasms is a temporary process due to physical conditions. Inspired with this conviction,

he ceases more and more to be dominated by these passing conditions, and preserves eternal hope in his spirit if he cannot as yet do it in his lower principles.

When we think of the note of despair that is filling the world in consequence of lack of knowledge, we begin to realize what a knowledge of Reincarnation with its assurance of immortality may mean. The rush for wealth and luxury, the hurry and impatience of life, are founded on our pessimistic beliefs. If a man asks himself, as all must do sometimes, "What am I here for, and what is the object of life?" the only answers he can make are, first, to shelve the question — banish it to the back of the mind — or to try to feed his hopes and ambitions on the prospect of the theological heaven — a prospect which appeals rather to the wish for consolation and release from effort than to the noble aspiration for more service, greater victories. In both cases the answers are emasculating and calculated to minimize the human spirit. But Reincarnation holds out the prospect — a prospect which

becomes ever more certain and sure as we grow in knowledge — of renewed youth and joy, fresh opportunities, continued loving service among fellow-hearts, victory upon victory won over the frailties of human nature, and a limitless vista of Life and realization in spheres of consciousness so vast and full that we can not form the faintest conception of them. This is truly a conception calculated to give back to humanity its forgotten vigor and banish all that feebleness and vacillation of thought so characteristic of it at present. When we have again this world-old knowledge we may regain the paradise we have lost and discover what lost elixir quickened the nerves of the mighty men of old and endowed them with such godlike vigor.

Age is but a condition of the body (and even the stiffness of age is not inevitable; in true health it would be unknown); the Soul never grows old, and the more we make its Life our own, the more do we succeed in keeping eternally young and fresh. Death is a sleep in a sense truer than the poets

knew ; for it is attended by a fresh awakening and renewed vigor. The loves of youth, which we so vainly regret, will be born again — but next time more purified from the cloying element of passion. The delusions die — and well it is so — but the seed remains and next time we will love more truly and less personally.

And the death of those we love? What a terrible thing for those who do not believe in immortality! What doubtful consolation for those who have only the uncertain beliefs of theology! But Theosophists feel that the real Man still lives; and that all that was best and most lovable in him dwells eternally in the realms of Soul, where there is true communion and perfect understanding. Freed from the afflictions of mortal life, that loved Soul feels those It loves, helping them interiorly in their own struggles.\*

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\* This has nothing to do with "Spiritualism." Theosophy expressly teaches that the Ego in Devachan can never appear to people on earth except under the most exceptional conditions, such as would

If Reincarnation helps us in prospect, it can help us equally in retrospect. For it is no small inspiration to look back and feel that we are somebody; that our mortal clay conceals an eternal Soul vested with knowledge and power; that we are on a pilgrimage of our own choosing — masters of our destiny, not pieces of driftwood. The great purposes of Nature and Deity are our own purposes; we will them. It is only the wayward personal desires that cause us temporary aberrations from the Path we are treading. It helps us to "will our destiny," to make our will identical with the Universal Will.

There is no problem, among the many vexed ones of life, which Reincarnation will not clear up. It is a perfect master-key. And

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require the presence of a real Teacher and could never occur in a séance-room. What appears or communicates in a séance-room is only a phantasm created partly of the astral substance of medium and sitters and partly (in many cases) of the *kāma-rūpa* or "spook" of deceased persons, which is a wholly irresponsible and unmoral or immoral entity. On the dangers and delusions of Spiritualism see other Manuals.

it is no new invention, but a bringing of our philosophy into line with our secret intuitions of the Truth. It is in fact a revelation; and as all real revelations must, it carries conviction with it, demonstrating itself by its own obvious verity. May this key of the ancient Mysteries unlock many a door that bars the way of human progress!

## VII

### REINCARNATION IN MODERN LITERATURE

**T**HE works of the poets and other writers show that the truth has always been felt in the heart, though hindered in expression by the overlying mass of mental disabilities and prejudices. The Higher Mind in man, whose seat is in the Heart, *knows and sees*; but it needs the help of the lower intellectual functions to interpret its knowledge into terms which can be expressed in language. When these intellectual functions instead of interpreting, throw up clouds of doubt and obscurity, the result is not a teaching but a poetical aspiration or a pious conjecture. But it speaks well for the truth of a teaching that it should have survived in this intuitive form through so much discouragement. It should be noted that the writers have used,



for want of a better word, the term "Metempsychosis"; but they do not mean animal transmigration.



### SELECTIONS FROM POETRY AND PROSE

EDWIN ARNOLD

Nay, but as when one layeth  
His worn-out robes away,  
And, taking new ones, sayeth,  
"These will I wear today!"  
So putteth by the spirit  
Lightly its garb of flesh,  
And passeth to inherit  
A residence afresh.—*Song Celestial*



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

A presence strange at once and known  
Walked with me as my guide,  
The skirts of some forgotten life  
Trailed noiseless at my side.

Was it a dim-remembered dream  
Or glimpse through aeons old?  
The secret which the mountains kept  
The river never told.—*A Mystery*

## PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

A prescient lore  
Springs from some life outlived of yore.  
O swift instructive startling gleams  
Of deep soul-knowledge; not as dreams  
For aye ye vaguely dawn and die,  
But oft with lightning certainty  
Pierce through the dark oblivious brain  
To make old thoughts and memories plain;  
Thoughts which perchance must travel back  
Across the wild bewildering track  
Of countless aeons.



## BAYARD TAYLOR

All outward vision yields to that within  
Whereof nor creed nor canon holds the key;  
We only feel that we have ever been  
And evermore shall be.

---

The poet came to the land of the East  
When spring was in the air,  
The East was dressed for a wedding feast  
So young she seemed and fair,  
And the poet knew the land of the East,  
His soul was native there.

All things to him were the visible forms  
Of early and precious dreams,  
Familiar visions that mocked his quest  
Beside the western streams,  
Or gleamed in the gold of the clouds unrolled  
In the sunset's dying beams.




## WALT WHITMAN

Facing West from California's shores,  
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,  
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of  
maternity, the land of migrations, look afar,  
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the circle  
almost circled:  
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the  
vales of Kashmere,  
From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage,  
and the hero,  
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and  
the spice islands,  
Long having wandered since, round the earth hav-  
ing wandered,  
Now I face home again, very pleased and joyous.

---

As to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of  
many deaths.  
No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times  
before.



## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

Sometimes a breath floats by me,  
And odor from Dreamland sent,  
Which makes the ghost seem nigh me  
Of a something that came and went,  
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not  
In what diviner sphere;  
Of mem'ries that come and go not;  
Like music once heard by an ear  
That cannot forget or reclaim it;  
A something so shy it would shame it  
To make it a show.  
A something too vague, could I name it,  
For others to know:  
As though I had lived it and dreamed it,  
As though I had acted and schemed it  
Long ago.



## WADDINGTON

Where wert thou, Soul, ere yet my body born  
Became thy dwelling place? Didst thou on earth  
Or in the clouds, await this body's birth,  
Or by what chance upon that winter's morn  
Didst thou this body find, a babe forlorn?  
Didst thou in sorrow enter, or in mirth,  
Or for a jest perchance, to try its worth  
Thou tookest flesh, ne'er from it to be torn?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

I have been here before,  
But when or how I cannot tell;  
I know the grass beyond the door,  
The sweet keen smell,  
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.



DAVID HUME

The soul, if immortal, existed before our birth.  
What is incorruptible must be ungenerable.  
Metempsychosis [reincarnation] is the only system  
of immortality that Philosophy can hearken to.



WORDSWORTH

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath elsewhere had its setting,  
And cometh from afar.



PROFESSOR WILLIAM KNIGHT

If we could legitimately determine any question  
of belief by the number of its adherents, the *quod*  
*semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* would apply  
to metempsychosis [reincarnation] more fitly than to

any other. I think it is quite as likely to be revived and to come to the front again as any rival theory.



## PROFESSOR FRANCIS BOWEN

The doctrine of metempsychosis [reincarnation] may almost claim to be a natural or innate belief in the human mind, if we may judge from its wide diffusion among the nations of the earth and its prevalence throughout the historical ages.



## GEORGE MACDONALD

We cannot yet have learned all that we are meant to learn through the body. How much of the teaching, even of this world, can the most diligent and most favored man have exhausted before he is called to leave it? Is all that remains lost?



## EDWARD YOUNG

Look nature through; 'tis revolution all,  
All change, no death. Day follows night, and night  
The dying day; stars rise and set, and set and rise.  
Earth takes the example. All to re-flourish fades  
As in a wheel: all sinks to reascend;  
Emblems of man who passes, not expires.

## WILLIAM SHARP

None sees the slow and upward sweep  
By which the soul from life-depths deep  
Ascends,—unless, mayhap, when free,  
With each new death we backward see  
The long perspective of our race  
Our multitudinous past lives trace.



## ALFRED TENNYSON

Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mold?  
. . . . .  
It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.  
  
As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.  
. . . . .  
But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace;  
. . . . .  
Or if thro' lower lives I came —  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame —

I might forget my weaker lot;  
For is not our first year forgot?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

Of something felt, like something here;  
Of something done, I know not where;  
Such as no language may declare.

—*The Two Voices*



*There is No Religion Higher than Truth*

---

## **The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society**

---

*Established for the benefit of the people of the earth & all creatures*

---

---

### **OBJECTS**

This BROTHERHOOD is part of a great and universal movement which has been active in all ages.

This Organization declares that Brotherhood is a fact in Nature. Its principal purpose is to teach Brotherhood, demonstrate that it is a fact in Nature and make it a living power in the life of humanity.

Its subsidiary purpose is to study ancient and modern religions, science, philosophy and art; to investigate the laws of Nature and the divine powers in man.

\* \* \*

THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, founded by H. P. Blavatsky at New York, 1875, continued after her death under the leadership of the co-founder, William Q. Judge, and now under the leadership of their successor, Katherine Tingley, has its Headquarters at the International Theosophical Center, Point Loma, California.

This Organization is not in any way connected with nor does it endorse any other societies using the name of Theosophy.

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The whole work of the Organization is under the direction of the Leader and Official Head, Katherine Tingley, as outlined in the Constitution.

---

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It is a regrettable fact that many people use the name of Theosophy and of our Organization for self-interest, as also that of H. P. Blavatsky, the Foundress, to attract attention to themselves and to gain public support. This they do in private and public speech and in publications, also by lecturing throughout the country. Without being in any way connected with the **UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**, in many cases they permit it to be inferred that they are, thus misleading the public, and many honest inquirers are hence led away from the truths of Theosophy as presented by H. P. Blavatsky and her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley, and practically exemplified in their Theosophical work for the uplifting of humanity.

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MAN AFTER DEATH

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# THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

V

## MAN AFTER DEATH

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BY

A STUDENT

SECOND EDITION

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## PREFACE

**T**HE remarks under this head are intended to be introductory to each of the Manuals.

First, as to the spirit in which they are offered. These Manuals are not written in a controversial spirit, nor as an addition to the stock of theories awaiting public approval. The writers have no time to waste in arguing with people who do not wish to be convinced, or who ridicule everything which is new to their limited outlook. Their message is for those who desire to know — those who are seeking for something that will solve their doubts and remove their difficulties. For such, all that is needed is a clear exposition of the Theosophical teachings; for they will judge of the truth of a teaching by its power to answer the questions they ask. People realize, much more now than in the early days of the Theosophical Society, the value of Theosophy;

for the ever-increasing difficulties engendered by selfishness and materialism, by doubt and the multiplicity of theories, have created an urgent demand which it alone can satisfy.

Again, it is necessary to state clearly and emphatically the genuine teachings of Theosophy, as given by the Founder of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, and her successors, William Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley. For, as H. P. Blavatsky predicted, there are persons who have sought to pervert these teachings and turn them into a source of profit to themselves and their own selfish and ambitious schemes. The true teachings do not lend themselves to such purposes; their ideals are of the purest and most unselfish. Hence these persons have sought to promulgate under the name of Theosophy a perverted form of the teachings, from which Brotherliness and other pure motives are omitted, and which contains doctrines which H. P. Blavatsky showed to be maleficent and destructive. As these pseudo-Theosophists have gained a certain amount of notoriety by using the names of the Theosophical Society and its Leaders, it is necessary to warn the public against them

## **PREFACE**

v

and their misrepresentations. Their teachings can easily be shown, by comparison, to be directly contrary to those of H. P. Blavatsky, whom they nevertheless profess to follow. Instead of having for their basis self-sacrifice, self-purification, and the elevation of the human race, these teachings too often pander to ambition, vanity, and curiosity. In many cases they are altogether ridiculous, and only calculated to make people laugh. Nevertheless, as these travesties have served to discredit the name of Theosophy and to keep earnest inquirers away from the truth, it is well that the public should know their nature and origin. They are the work of people who were at one time members of the Theosophical Society, but who did not find in it that food for their own personalities of which they were really in search. So they turned against their teachers in wounded pride and vanity, and started little societies of their own—with themselves at the head.

The writers of these Manuals have no personal grievance against any such calumniators. Inspired by a profound love of the sublime teachings of Theosophy, they have made it

their life-work to bring the benefits which they have thereby received within the reach of as many people as possible. And they feel that they will have the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the public in exposing folly and bringing the truth to light.

Theosophy strikes unfamiliar ground in modern civilization, because it does not come under any particular one of the familiar headings of Religion, Science, Philosophy, etc., into which our age has divided its speculative activities. It dates back to a period in the history of mankind when such distinctions did not exist, but there was one Gnosis or Knowledge embracing all. Religion and Science, as we have them today, are but imperfect growths springing from the remnants of that great ancient system, the Wisdom-Religion, which included all that we now know as religion and science, and much more. Hence Theosophy will not appeal to the same motives as religion and science. It will not offer any cheap and easy salvation or put a premium upon mental inactivity and spiritual selfishness. Neither can it accommodate itself to the rules laid down by various schools of modern thought as to

what constitutes proof and what does not. But it can and does appeal to the Reason. The truth of doctrines such as Theosophy maintains, can only be estimated by their ability to solve problems and by their harmony with other truths which we know to be true. But in addition to this we have the testimony of the ages, which has been too long neglected by modern scholarship, but which is now being revealed by archaeologists and scholars, as H. P. Blavatsky prophesied that it would in this century.

It may perhaps be as well also to remind those who would criticise, that the state of modern opinion is scarcely such as to warrant anybody in assuming the attitude of a judge. It would be quite proper for a Theosophist, instead of answering questions or attempting to give proofs, to demand that his questioners should first state their own case, and to be himself the questioner. The result would certainly show that Theosophy, to say the very least, stands on an equal footing with any other view, since there is no certain knowledge, no satisfying explanation, to be found anywhere.

Since the days when the wave of materialism swept over the world, obliterating the traces of the ancient Wisdom-Religion and replacing it by theological dogmatism, our religions have had nothing to offer us in the way of a philosophical explanation of the laws of Being as revealed in Man and in Nature. Instead we have only had bare statements and dogmatic assertions. The higher nature of man is represented by such vague words as Spirit and Soul, which have little or no meaning for the majority. The laws of the universe are briefly summed up under the term "God," and all further consideration of them shut off. Then came a reaction against the dogmatism of religion, and man pinned his faith to knowledge gained by study and reflection, limiting his researches, however, to the outer world as presented by the senses, and fearing to trench upon the ground which dogmatic theology had rendered the field of so much contention. The result of this has been that neither in religions nor sciences, have we any teaching about the higher nature of man or the deeper mysteries of the universe. This is a field which is left entirely unexplored,

or is at best the subject of tentative and unguided conjectures.

Until, therefore, religious teachers have something definite, consistent, and satisfactory to offer, and until science can give us something better than mere confessions of nescience or impudent denials with regard to everything beyond its own domain, Theosophy can afford to assume the rôle of questioner rather than that of questioned, and does not *owe* anybody any explanations whatever. It is sufficient to state its tenets and let them vindicate themselves by their greater reasonableness; and any further explanation that may be offered is offered rather from good will than from any obligation.

Theosophy undertakes to explain that which other systems leave unexplained, and is, on its own special ground, without a competitor. It can issue a challenge to theology, science, and other modern systems, to surpass it in giving a rational explanation of the facts of life.

Again, there are some questions which it is beyond the reach of the human mind, in *its present stage of development*, to answer; and



it would scarcely be just to arraign Theosophy for not answering these.

Judgment should in all cases be preceded by careful study. There are always those who will impatiently rush to questions which a further study would have rendered unnecessary; and it is safe to say that the majority of "objections" raised to Theosophical teachings are such as could have been solved by the objector himself, had he been a genuine student. In the ordinary courses of education, scholars are required and are content, to accept provisionally many of the teachers' statements, in full confidence that further study will explain what in the beginning cannot be made clear. In the same spirit an earnest student of Theosophy will be wise enough to hold many of his difficulties in reserve, until, by further investigation, he has gained better acquaintance with his subject. In the case of those who are not willing to adopt these wise and patient methods of study, it may be reasonably questioned whether they are the more anxious to learn or to disprove.

Above all it is sought to make these Man-

uals such that they shall appeal to the heart and not *merely* to the head; that they shall be of practical service to the reader in the problems of his daily life, and not mere intellectual exercises. For there have been in past days books written by persons more distinguished for a certain grade of mental nimbleness than for heartfelt devotion to the cause of truth; and these have appealed only to those people who love intricate philosophical problems better than practical work. But as H. P. Blavatsky so frequently urged, the message of Theosophy is for suffering humanity; and the great Teachers, whose sole purpose is to bring to mankind the Light of Truth and the saving grace of real Brotherhood can have no interest in catering for the mental curiosity of merely a few well-to-do individuals. Even soulless men, said H. P. Blavatsky, can be brilliantly intellectual; but for those who are in earnest in their desire to reach the higher life intellectual fireworks alone will have little attraction. We intend, therefore, to keep the practical aspect of the teachings always to the front, and to show, as far as possible, that they are what

they claim to be—the gospel of a new hope and salvation for humanity.

These Booklets are not all the product of a single pen, but are written by different Students at the International Headquarters of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY at Point Loma, California. Each writer has contributed his own quota to the series.

For further explanations on Theosophy generally, the reader is referred to the Book List published elsewhere in this volume and to the other Manuals of this series, which treat of Theosophy and the various Theosophical teachings.

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There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins ;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls ;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

*Shakespeare*

## I

### THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

**I**F a man die shall he live again?" How many myriad times has this question been asked since the days of Job, and how many times imperfectly answered! But in this age of transition an opportunity has been given the western world to obtain by the aid of Theosophy a more accurate view of Life, and what is called Death, than has been possible since the destruction of the Mysteries in Greece, Egypt, and western Asia.

The popular dread of death and the misconceptions concerning it arise from ignorance, the parent of evil. We are yet ignorant of our own true nature; humanity is a sealed book to itself; and no wonder, therefore, the future looks dark, uncertain, and forbidding.

We all, at least all who have begun to study their own natures impersonally, feel a

certain cramping bondage in our lives, a sense of limitation. We tremble on the brink of discovering that life contains far greater possibilities than we had dared to hope for, and that we are not living up to the height of our powers. We dimly suspect that there is a Higher Principle in us that must come out and take control, and our intuitions, timid and faint though they may be, and clouded by the materialism of the age, tell us that the death of the physical body cannot be the end of all things for us. Without a future existence for the larger Man that we feel stirring in our hearts at times, human life would indeed be "a discreditable episode on one of the meanest of the planets"!

How is it that our boasted intellectual progress has left us more ignorant, hopeless and bewildered than ever in respect to this supreme question? Why do we wear gloomy looks and black clothes, and entertain hopeless grief and dread in our hearts when this natural and inevitable shadow crosses our path? Our popular theology tells us "Death

is a mystery, we must hope for the best," and that the only *proof* of the resurrection is that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and opened the gates of Paradise for the faithful! a "proof" which is no proof to the majority of people. But orthodoxy is undermined to-day by scientific criticism, and many of its leading exponents have abandoned what were believed to be its central features. Today the churches speak with mental reservation and quavering voices of Heaven, Hell, and the "plan of Salvation"; the ringing note of certainty is wanting, for the Huxleys and Spencers have thoroughly shaken the walls of the creeds with their trumpet blasts of criticism. Few persons honestly believe in the old orthodoxy or in any plan of salvation at all. Dispassionate study of the "Higher Criticism" and a judicious regard of the unspiritual career of Christendom during the past nineteen weary centuries have thrown back the more thoughtful and, necessarily, the masses who follow, into doubt or indifference. Acts speak louder than words and it



is not to be denied that the lives of men today show that they have, in the main, lost the simple enthusiastic faith that sent Ridley and Latimer to the stake, or fired the fine ladies of Florence to sacrifice their vanities at the bidding of Savonarola. It is even considered impolite to speak on such subjects as the future life in general society! The crudity of the teachings of the churches on the subject of what happens after death is well typified by the lines of the famous hymn of Dr. Watts, beginning:

When rattling bones together fly  
From every quarter of the sky.

The publication of such gross caricatures of the truth has led people to doubt, justly enough, whether their self-appointed teachers know any more of the mystery of death than they themselves; and, as a natural consequence, those to whom the future is all dark, either cling to lives of hopeless suffering with the tenacity of despair, or destroy themselves in reckless disregard of the warnings they despise. The increase of suicide is

one of the most menacing signs of the times.

Science on its part has nothing definite to affirm and refuses to answer the question of the possibility of a future life for man. The scientific world hardly dares to admit there is such a question at all, and prefers to devote its attention to researches of inferior consequence. No doubt this attitude of scientific thought is but a temporary reaction against the absurd and obsolete dogmas of theology, but the fact remains that the anxious truth-seeker receives no answer, and that in pursuing what is called the practical, Science strangely ignores the most practical question of all, i. e., what are we here for; where have we come from; and where do we go? And in doing this Science today unscientifically disregards the testimony of a vast mass of facts bearing upon the question, and ignores the opinion of the greatest minds of the ages.

But if we shake off the preconceived prejudices we may have gathered from the vagaries of learned theological ignorance, or the negations of scientists, we will admit

that the importance of the subject is undeniable; it is only the possibility of gaining any certainty on the subject that is doubtful. What a different thing life is to one who realizes that "The soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor have no limits,"\* and that it is in his own hands for weal or woe, from what it appears to one who thinks, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. How is the materialist going to confront the "King of Terrors" when the icy hand suddenly strikes the beloved one? Will not his pride of negation bend at that crisis?—for much of modern scepticism is born of conceit. It is not impossible that at such times a strange, wild hope, a flash from a higher source may startle him as he gazes down the street of tombs, the Appian Way of dead hopes and attachments!

The teachings of Theosophy, simple in their broad outlines, profound as nature in their details, have come as a revealer to those

\* *Idyll of the White Lotus.*

who are seeking the way to Truth. Theosophy reconciles the conflict between science and religions; it is nothing new; the truths it brings forward are as old as the hills, but it puts them in a manner conformable to the temper of the age. William Q. Judge, the successor to Madame Blavatsky, the great teacher of Theosophy of the nineteenth century, says:

Embracing both the scientific and the religious, Theosophy is a scientific religion and a religious science. It is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man, but is a knowledge of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical, and intellectual constituents of nature and of man.

There is nothing grotesque in Theosophy; it is a system which is scientific and not merely speculative. It is inevitable as the multiplication table.

But Theosophy demands one difficult thing from the student — an unprejudiced attitude of mind, for it takes a real effort to change our standpoint and to admit that our ignor-

ance has been perpetuated by sheer unwillingness to climb to the heights where a broader view can be obtained. But as we do know we have wandered in darkness it would be foolish in the extreme not to follow a gleam of light even if we have to abandon some of the cherished impedimenta of mental habits. Those who are willing to make the plunge and step out of the old mental grooves will find rich and unexpected reward.

The Manuals of this series are not written for the purpose of defending Theosophy against the attacks of the misinformed or the traducer. They are for genuine inquirers who come honestly with unprejudiced minds, willing to try to comprehend something new, and whose hearts seek the truth, even if it seem a little strange at first. Theosophy is essentially the philosophy which those who suffer, and who may have despaired in the confusion of thought and turmoil of the age, have yearned for. And it is for those generous souls who seek help that they may the better serve others. The self-satisfied and the captious

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must pass on; this avenue of enlightenment is not open to them until later, when they have discovered their need and asked for help.

Though Theosophy opens a new realm of Nature to the student and unveils facts and their meanings that have been lost or buried, it is not dogmatic; it does not demand acceptance under penalties. By its reasonableness it attracts those who are not too deeply prejudiced to break free from preconceptions, and in time the proofs become too strong to be resisted. Theosophy could not be dogmatic and continue to be Theosophy, for it teaches man to look within himself for the truth and not to accept the testimony of another person, or of any book, as infallible. The real teacher is one who puts you in a position to find out truth for yourself. In Oriental Theosophy he is called the Guru, or guide and adjuster, and his duty is not to cram quantities of startling facts into the learner, but to show him how to travel from the known to the unknown. Theosophy tells us that if we follow the path of Brotherly conduct in

all our acts and thoughts, the path of self-discipline and self-purification, the royal and only road to the Higher Wisdom will be found. In the poetical words of H. P. Blavatsky:

There is a road steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the Heart of the Universe. I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that leads inward only and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer, there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onward there is reward past all telling, the power to bless and serve Humanity. For those who fail there are other lives in which success may come.

As we persevere in sincere altruistic effort for the uplifting of our "other selves," our Brothers, Theosophy promises us that the darkest shadows will be lifted, and the mystery of death be solved, for our vision will be so pure that we shall see things as they really are. Of course short essays like these

Manuals only deal with the initial steps, as they are but rudimentary and necessarily fragmentary, but they will be found to provide a few keys, derived from the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley, with which the reader may unlock some of the closed doors; H. P. Blavatsky herself said that she was instructed to put forward the teachings of Theosophy primarily "to break the molds of mind"; that is to say to give the brightest and most spiritual minds of this age the opportunity of finding for themselves the truth by showing them the line of search and the method of commencing.



## II

### THE PLACE OF DEATH IN EVOLUTION

**W**HILE, as we must all agree, the purpose of man's evolution is to lead him to the complete knowledge of the Universe in its height and depth, and to the enjoyment of its glory, this cannot be done, according to Theosophy, until he becomes one with the Higher Self, the Divine Soul behind our separated human personalities, that Divine Soul which is the Christos, the true Vine of which we are the branches. To attain this godlike state we have to break down the wall of selfishness dividing one from the other; we have to identify our personal interests with those of the whole, and consciously to feel the unity of the race—that Brotherhood which is a fact in Nature, and which is not a

sentiment or a fanciful conceit of idle dreamers —

I am the Vine, ye are the branches. . . . If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. . . . and cast into the fire and burned. — *John* xv, 5, 6.

Those who are beginning to realize that the open door to all the powers of the soul is through actual, unselfish devotion to the interests of humanity; those who are seeking that which was lost, will find a certain spiritual comradeship in Theosophical work that nothing else can give, in rich, overflowing measure.

Physical science acts on the principle known as that of "*testimonium paupertatis*," i. e., that far-fetched and remote causes for appearances must not be sought when lesser and more obvious ones are sufficient. For instance, a weight rises the moment the precise amount of force necessary to overcome the resistance is put forth. It is not necessary to use a steam-hammer to crack a nut. So with the Theosophical teachings about

Man after Death — they are the simplest and most rational intimations that could be looked for on a subject of such profound obscurity to the ordinary human mind. Above all, they are not speculations as to what may be, like the poems of Dante or Milton. They are the results of the observations of millenniums by those advanced Helpers of the race who have pierced the veil and who have been able to enter consciously into many states of which we can hardly imagine the existence. Though the Teachers have not given out nearly all the knowledge in their possession, many teachings belonging to the regions of the higher Mysteries being reserved as they cannot be revealed yet in our present state of evolution, enough is plainly set forth to satisfy reasonable inquirers who have gotten away from the misleading prejudices and limitations of orthodox bigotry or materialistic science.

H. P. Blavatsky and William Q Judge left us a mine of valuable hints by which we can work out the thinly veiled clues with which the ancient philosophies and Sacred

Scriptures of the world are filled, and we have the inestimable advantage of having Katherine Tingley, our Teacher and Leader, with us to help us and to prevent us from wasting our time on unprofitable byways of speculation.

The teachings of Theosophy deal with such intimate subjects and are so sacred that it would be a profanation to bring them forward in anything like school text-book form. They pertain to the most serious matters that can touch us, to things closest to our hearts, to feelings which English-speaking people particularly have a great and almost unconquerable reluctance to discuss. The secrets of Death and the mysterious journey of the radiant immortal soul should, fittingly, be spoken of in Miltonic periods of stately verse, or suggested to the reverent ear by noble music. Feeling this so strongly, the subject of Man after Death will be treated without bringing in the text-book atmosphere; for we recognize fully that it has to do with our real selves, stripped of all pretense, as well as with our

more tender relations with those "we have loved and lost awhile."

For convenience, because the English language has not developed the suitable terms, we shall use the few Eastern words which H. P. Blavatsky adopted to save time in endlessly long explanatory sentences. The words may be found in Sanskrit or other Oriental languages, but the meanings attached to them by H. P. Blavatsky are not always precisely the same nowadays in the original languages from which they were taken. As Theosophy is not *exoteric* Buddhism, Hindûism, nor Christianity, but is the deeper meaning behind all the world-religions, the special words selected naturally had to carry a deeper significance than is attributed to them by philologists. The special uses of the few terms used will become quite clear as we proceed. Every science requires a certain number of words of technical meaning and it would be curious if Theosophy, the Science of Life, were an exception.

As a necessary introduction to the Theoso-

phical teaching of what takes place after the last breath is drawn we must have a fair idea of what Man really is. In a previous Manual the complex nature of man's principles has been described at length, so it is needless to go into detail here. For our present purpose the following convenient arrangement of the principles or subdivisions of our nature as published by H. P. Blavatsky is sufficient, but we may notice in passing that several other slightly modified classifications were used by her as well.

The various Eastern Schools of psychology differ as to the best arrangement, for the principles can be grouped in different divisions. What we call the physical body — i. e., the illusory appearance produced by the passing of material molecules through the ideal astral matrix — being so mutable can be safely ignored. Strictly speaking, it is not a "Principle" at all. The Egyptian and ancient Greek classifications are still other modifications, but H. P. Blavatsky decided that the following order was the most suitable for her pupils.

THE HIGHER  
SELF is

Ātmā, the inseparable ray of the Universal and ONE SELF. It is the God *above*, more than within, us. Happy the man who succeeds in saturating his *inner Ego* with it!

THE SPIRIT-  
UAL *divine*  
"Ego" is

the spiritual soul or *Buddhi*, in close union with *Manas*, the mind-principle, without which the former is no Ego at all but only the *Ātmic Vehicle*.

THE INNER  
or HIGHER  
"Ego" is

*Manas*, the "fifth" Principle, so called, independently of *Buddhi*. The Mind-Principle is only the Spiritual Ego when merged *into one* with *Buddhi*; no materialist being supposed to have in him *such* an Ego, however great his intellectual capacities. It is the permanent *Individuality* or the "Reincarnating Ego."

THE LOWER  
or PERSONAL  
"Ego" is

the physical man in conjunction with his *lower Self*—i. e., animal instincts, passions, desires, etc. It is called the "false personality," and consists of the *lower Manas* combined with *Kāma Rūpa* and operating through the physical body and its phantom or "double."

The remaining "principle," *Prâna*, or "Life," is strictly speaking, the radiating force or energy of *Âtmâ*—as the Universal Life and the ONE SELF—Its lower, or rather, (in its effects) more physical, because manifesting, aspect. *Prâna*, or Life, permeates the whole being of the objective Universe, and is called a "principle" only because it is an indispensable factor and the *deus ex machinâ* of the living man.

We must never fall into the vulgar error of thinking of these principles as entirely separate things, like the coats of an onion, so to speak; during waking life our consciousness is playing through the whole set of principles, *Âtmâ* excepted, as It really stands above everything else. The human consciousness can not be defined intelligibly; at best we can say it is the feeling of "I-am-I" and no other. The seven principles somewhat resemble the seven prismatic colors which appear to be one, white, when united, but when separated are found to have individual characteristics. Force and matter are admittedly indestructible, and conscious intelligence makes them coherent and orderly in their manifesta-



tion; otherwise chaos would ensue. The power of feeling inherent in us penetrates the different principles; but in our present state the mental self-consciousness is what makes us man, though unfortunately with the rarest exceptions this is merely the lower intellection and not the higher mind or the complete Manas. When humanity is fully self-conscious on every plane of existence it will stand forth as the Divine Man it is destined to become.

After death the Higher Manas withdraws into itself its "Shadow," the higher aroma of the lower Manas, which has been prominent during life, and which we erroneously think is our real self; it is this dual Manasic principle, therefore, that we have to watch, chiefly, in its post-mortem experiences.

To get an adequate idea of the conditions after death we must realize that the center of feeling giving us the sense of I-am-I, our individual consciousness, is able to identify itself with each of the different aspects or planes of nature. These identifications are

usually, though inexactly, called *changes of consciousness*. It is a matter of common recognition that a person is in an entirely different state when concentrated upon the solution of some difficult mathematical problem from the one he is in while enjoying a Christmas dinner or listening to worthy music; the intuitive consciousness which directs right action as in a flash, heedless of the slow process of reasoning, is different again; and then there are the little-understood states of dreaming and dreamless sleep. Theosophy being essentially based upon the study of consciousness, follows the individual perception through these "states of consciousness" and many others not yet recognized by science, until the personal limitations melt away into the whole, and "the dewdrop slips into the shining sea." Throughout all the ramifications of this marvelous journey let us never forget that it is the conditions that change, not the perceiving, conscious Center.

There are many planes or conditions in Nature's marvelous storehouse, and the veh-

icles or sheaths that the soul has created in order that it may understand these planes by plunging into them, are limitations. As we get away from the physical world and the brain-cells of physiology, the vehicles of consciousness are found to be of more subtle matter than the terrestrial, more ethereal, in harmony with the new conditions. The most helpful method is to consider them as possessing higher speed and different qualities of vibration, and consequently, unfamiliar properties and energies.

The table of principles given on page 18 leads to an important point in connexion with consciousness after death. To understand this we must dwell upon the strange fact that a center of self-consciousness can apparently emanate or put out an "automatic" consciousness resembling the light thrown by a lamp on a wall. It lights up a dimmer sensibility latent in the atoms of the associated substance. So, after death, the "astral" man or ethereal double of the body, though intrinsically mindless, has an automatic memory, an induced or

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reflected intelligence from its association with the lower Manas, which persists for a while, but must not be mistaken for that of the real Ego.

There are other separate persistences of consciousness after death which will be referred to later on, but the principle is the same. The full consciousness neither disappears into annihilation at death, nor does it exist in the same conditions as during life, but passes on to higher and "inner" states of being, leaving behind it sundry vehicles or emanations which have a reflected life and sensibility of their own, lasting for various periods according to the energy put into that part of the nature during life, and derived from their contact with the real Ego. To get even a dim appreciation of the release of the Higher Manas by death, the student is urged to dwell on this possibly novel conception to him of the temporary persistences of partial "reflections" and survivals of the lower passions of the human being now undergoing purification.

Perhaps this important point can be grasped more clearly if we watch the automatic department of our minds which intelligently, even if vaguely, answers questions, counts figures, and does other simple *mental* acts while "*we*" are profoundly absorbed in reverie. It is quite common to read a page without having the slightest recollection of a word, because the connexion between the real center of perception and the automatic consciousness has been temporarily separated. Some business men, again, devise their most important enterprises while the lower mentality is automatically occupied with a game of cards. The same part of our nature has the power to shut the doors of memory against the higher man, and prevent their being opened for a while. Many instances of dual consciousness in daily life will occur to the reader, without referring to the merely physical consciousness of the body, which we all know can be absolutely disregarded for a while, as in the case of soldiers not feeling their wounds in the excitement of battle.

From the knowledge that consciousness can be in more than one state at the same time, paradoxical though it seems, it is but a short step to see that a continuation of a lower order of intelligence in a subtle body, after the breaking down of the bond uniting the whole, is not by any means an extraordinary idea.

The instinctive intelligence, call it reflex action, or what you will, in a decapitated turtle or conger-eel, which will bite, if irritated, for hours after being cut up; or the automatic memory in a heart which keeps it beating for a long time after removal from the body, are illustrations of similar persistence; and the semi-animal sensibility of the Venus' Fly-trap or the Sensitive Plant is closely allied. The appreciation of the complex groups of semi-conscious subordinate "men" combining with the real Man to form a human being, is of similar nature to the comprehension of a solid geometrical figure from the study of its component faces laid out on a flat plane. Like the geometrical figure which at last combines

in the mind, as a solid, the unity of the principles has to be felt by the inner perception.

Observe carefully that Theosophy teaches that these semi-intelligent emanations — passions and desires — have bodily form to manifest in, however tenuous and ethereal it may be and however temporary. This point will be further dealt with later, but it is necessary to refer to it now for fear of misunderstanding.

The normal consciousness, composed of all the aspects of mental and emotional consciousness, added to the lower sensations of the physical cells and the organs of the body, we call our personal self. Theosophy calls this the "false" personality, and it is this that is greatly modified by death, which weeds out the impermanent and intensifies the self-consciousness of the Inner or Higher Ego.

Change is necessary for progress in the present condition of things. The feeling of Selfhood is partially induced from the element of change in the surroundings. Though we have obviously to advance beyond this attitude of

mind, which exists because of our incomplete development, yet at this moment each perceives his own existence by the relationship of himself to what is not himself; and that relationship, to be felt, requires friction or change. Although, philosophically speaking, behind all stands the Spectator, the Watcher, the *Ātmā-Buddhi*, yet from the standpoint of the lower mind, absolute changelessness of conditions would be equivalent to non-existence. We only feel the presence of still water by a difference of temperature; when the temperature becomes the same as that of the finger the water is not felt. We should lose all knowledge of our existence if there were no changes of consciousness. "Absolute" consciousness would be the same as non-existence to us as individual human beings, for the same reason that "absolute" light without the slightest shade or variety of color would be the same in effect as pure darkness, from want of contrast—or otherwise, from lack of change. "Death," therefore, is a necessary part of life for us at present, for it gives the greatest pos-



sible change of conditions, and ushers in a new order of existence for a while.

Carrying further the idea of change, Theosophy shows that the alternation of life and death — cyclic manifestation and repose — is a fundamental law of the universe; but what is withdrawal and dissolution from one aspect is the opening into keener life when regarded from the other pole of being. So the death of the body allows the soul to be born into a larger life, to seek spiritual refreshment until the inevitable periodic law draws it back into reincarnation again on earth — to be, like Adam, “clothed in skin,” in order to gain a further share of experience in the material world.

Earthly existence is, from the higher aspect, death, not only allegorically or mystically, but actually; for the higher Ego, when entangled with the brain mind, temporarily loses its celestial knowledge, and is only able to re-enter the higher spiritual states, in the case of the *normal* man, during “dreamless” sleep. Sleep is indeed the twin brother of

death, and in greater measure than modern thinkers suppose.

It must not be thought that man has to undergo rebirths on earth for ever, although a large number of such experiences are necessary under cyclic law. After material conditions and temptations have been mastered, other regions open out and physical incarnation, being unnecessary, is left behind. But, as this subject is touched upon in the preceding *Manual on Reincarnation*, we need not pursue it further here.

### III

#### THE PROCESS OF RELEASE

**H**AVING gained from the teachings of Theosophy a broad idea of what man really is we are better prepared to understand the process of release from the prison of the body; for death is a deliverer in the present conditions of earth-life, with selfishness and animality rampant. Death is the friend to the higher spiritual nature. Life as led today is fraught with far greater suffering than death; to millions it is life that is the King of Terrors, judging by the terrible increase in the number of suicides. But the Theosophist who really feels the continuity of life, its indestructibility, and who has felt the heart-touch even for a moment, has no more fear of death than of any other natural process in the experience of the soul. The student of Theosophy knows that death is not an unprecedented catastrophe

or unlooked-for event, but a change natural to the state of evolution we are in at present. Doubtless it is a great and transforming change, and many strange portals and tortuous passages have to be traversed, but the real, immortal man knows the password — “Purification”— which will unlock the mystic doors.

After the last breath has been expired and all seems over, some time usually elapses before the inner man has absolutely finished with his earthly tenement. Concentrated for a while in the deepest centers of the brain and totally unconscious of the body he is now leaving, man reads the record of his past life, drawn from the imperishable register of the “astral light,” which nothing can modify; every event is presented in the startling vividness of life itself, long forgotten incidents are resurrected, and during the few moments before the loosening of the “silver thread” the past stands out in minutest detail and also as a whole, so that the complete chain of cause and effect is seen. This is the first Judgment Day, and there is no escape from this living picture gal-

lery; for the man, now the Spectator of his deeds as if they were those of another, is compelled to be honest and to recognize where he failed and where he succeeded, where the lower nature conquered or where the higher gained the day. No excuses can be made at this awful moment. In many cases of apparent drowning the sufferers have been able to recollect passing through a similar profoundly impressive experience; though no doubt it is far less vivid than the vision at the time of real death.

That this solemn retrospect may bring forth its deepest results, that the facing of the calm dispassionate judgment of the Higher Ego may not lose its full efficacy, a peaceful atmosphere in the chamber of death is most important. Though the senses have ceased to convey their messages to the brain, and the inner man can give no sign of his presence, any extreme agitation in his surroundings, such as excess of grief in the survivors, is felt by him through other channels and produces a retarding effect upon his rightful progress toward more and more inward states. Abandonment to the ex-

tremity of woe by those to whom the departing soul is closely attached is a positive injury to it, and should never be allowed. It is really a form of self-indulgence, and is not characteristic of true unselfish love, nor suitable for a moment fraught with such momentous consequences. It is necessary to speak very plainly on this point, for it is one of primary importance to all who love their fellowmen. Many persons seem to take a morbid kind of enjoyment in the over-indulgence in grief, a pride in being able to display supreme emotion. All the great religious teachers and philosophers of the world have censured extreme abandonment to sorrow, and Theosophy demonstrates why they objected. They knew it injures both the living and the dying. The solemn trial the loved one is passing through while re-living the past at the time of death and for a while after, should not be interrupted, nor should the soul be embarrassed by the despairing grief of the bereaved ones who often seem at those times to have utterly lost all hope or trust in the Higher Law.

This is a very delicate and sacred subject and in trying to help those who are in severe pain a sympathetic though firm touch is needed. Here is a time when Theosophy comes like a breath of fresh air, with its gentle message of healing to the stricken mourners. To all who have realized, even a little, the principle of Universal Brotherhood in their lives, the way quickly opens out of the close atmosphere of self-centered grief into the healthy air of generous service. Tears? yes, if you must; but let them be transmuted from tears of despair to tears of tender sympathy. Theosophy does not check the faintest breath of heart-love that might help and strengthen the departed in the effort he is now commencing, under circumstances of extreme novelty and bewilderment, to break off with the lower things of earth and to enter into the new life through the gates of the mystic "second death."

Excess of grief on the part of the bereaved is an unbrotherly yielding to personal emotion. It is a subtle form of self-gratification. Besides the obvious weakening and disheartening

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after-effect on the survivors it seriously retards the pilgrim soul on his dark journey. But trust in the higher Law; tender reminiscence; combined with a loving desire for the purification and progress of the lost one, and a firm putting down of uncontrolled and sentimental lamentation, help to build a bridge of light for the friend who is crossing the mysterious river. Dignified self-control on the part of the survivors generates the atmosphere of peace, and surely it is a great comfort to feel that high spiritual and sympathetic feeling can really give help in the time of trial, though no external sign may be shown in return.

The touching Bible story of David's conduct when his son was threatened with death is a beautiful illustration of the Theosophical teaching. After doing everything in his power to ward off the danger while the child still lived — fasting and weeping, as soon as there was no further hope he calmly returned to his duty, chastened and purified, saying, "Now that he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can



I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." (II Sam. 12)

Once we realize the inner spiritual unity of the whole of humanity, embodied or disembodied, i. e., the deeper meaning of Universal Brotherhood, there is no room for hopeless grief, which arises from the implicit denial of the great truth that the kingdom of God is within us and that we are the temples of God.

While the retrospect of the past is taking place and the brain-mind is yielding up the minutest recollections forgotten since the moment which saw them born, the bodily form is breaking up under the pressure of a change in polarity. H. P. Blavatsky puts it thus:

When a body dies it passes into the same polarity as its male [positive] energy, and repels therefore, the active agent, which, losing hold of the whole, fastens on the parts or molecules, the action being called chemical. (*Secret Doctrine*, I, 572)

The active energy is *Prâna*, the vital solar force which animates all things, permeating everything, like water in a sponge. In life the body is polarized oppositely to this, and

so, by the well-known law of nature, a healthy interplay exists between the two. It is a case of manifestation through the action of the "pairs of opposites." In electric action for instance, every output of positive electricity has to be balanced by a corresponding display of negative energy. During the day the solar Prânic energy has been accumulating and by the hour of bedtime this positive flood begins to overpower the resisting negative forces of the body, which is then actually too full of vitality. It can no longer stand the strain and sleep is necessary to restore the balance. In death the body is completely overpowered by Prâna, we die from an excess of life, for the tremendous force rushing through the cells tears them apart, and destroys them in consequence of there being no opposing force strong enough to resist the pressure. William Q. Judge says:

When we awake we are in equilibrium as to our organs and life; when we fall asleep we are yet more full of energy than in the morning; it has exhausted us; it finally kills the body. Such a

contest could not be waged for ever, since the whole solar system's weight of life is pitted against the power to resist focused in one small human frame.

A time comes in the life of every man when the mysterious disintegrating tendency increases rapidly and the body succumbs to what often seems an insufficient physical cause. The existence of this cyclic period of breaking-up is derived from the past and is largely hereditary. Man is a creature of habit and there is a strong hereditary tendency for successive generations to do the same things at the same periods of life. The development of the unborn child, the various physiological changes in the body, the arrival of the teeth, beard, etc., follow recognized cycles. Further still, evil tendencies, such as a craving for drink, have been observed to break out at exactly the same age in father and son, extending sometimes over several generations. Likewise a period when the body gives up the fight against the natural pressure of the Solar System comes to every one.

the length of normal life seldom exceeding seventy years.

Can this change be overcome and healthy life be lengthened indefinitely? If we lived wisely and were pure in act and thought we should not be the sport of this habit, which is of our own creation. Once this critical time is tided over there is no reason why life should not be prolonged. If we were truly selfless we should be able to lay down or take up the body at will, and not as now have it wrenched from us. But as the human race will obviously continue to perpetuate present conditions for a long time to come, we may dismiss further consideration on this point, as it would carry us beyond the scope of this essay. Very few persons would care to live on after the death of all their friends into new circumstances for which they had not been prepared in early life. The lesson contained in the legend of the Wandering Jew, an ordinary man who can never find rest but has to carry about the horrible memories of his past, is not encouraging to those

who may fancy an immensely long life in their present consciousness would be a desirable thing. We are irresistibly reminded of the Greek story of the love of Eos (the dawn) for Tithonus, son of Priam. The goddess succeeded in gaining immortality for her human spouse, but forgot to ask for eternal youth, and so the poor man became decrepit and miserable in course of time.

Eternal youth in the legend of course typifies the child-state we have lost, for without that, eternal life would be a terrible infliction. Jesus put the matter very plainly when he told the people that they could not enter the kingdom of heaven until they had become as little children. Fortunately the merciful law of Reincarnation gives the mind a complete break, as the memory of former lives is not contained in the new brain, and the man of desire does not know how to evoke it. Those few exceptional persons who have attained the power of safely passing through the dangerous cyclic period are, by the very nature of the case, qualified to endure the new condi-

tions which greatly prolonged life must bring.

The disintegrating impulse would be easily resisted and the average length of healthy, useful activity increased if it were not that the selfish passional nature has been allowed to grow inordinately strong. The passions, coalescing into one dominant force in later life, form an enemy which takes advantage of the hereditary tendency to dissolve, and at last, as if with glee, gives the fatal blow. The final disintegration of the physical body is only the accentuation of the process of breaking up which is continually in action throughout life.

Consider for a moment what is this body which seems so firm and stable. Is it the material molecules? Hardly, for they are in a constant state of flux, passing into the frame and out of it ceaselessly. Not for one minute is the body in the same condition; as each particle yields up its quota of energy it is hurried away to be revived by the sunshine; man's body is the least permanent of all his principles; in fact, so evanescent is

it that some schools of Eastern philosophers have declined to call it one of the principles at all! It is like a river. How can we define a river accurately? Is it the bed, or the water? Both are forever changing; the sparkling drops never stay one moment, but glide along to their ocean home, not, however, to remain there long, but to rise again in vapor and unite into some other stream. The river bed itself changes in shape, in position, and in depth. In fact the river in itself is really the persisting "Ideal form" behind the everchanging particles. When the ancients named their rivers "Father" Tiber, or the "Son" of Brahmâ (Brahmâputra) they were allegorizing this point in poetical language. The matter of our bodies is as unstable as the water in the rivers, and as a further resemblance, on leaving the body to pass into the outer air it is not quite the same, for it has been impressed with some of the reflected consciousness of the man, it has been raised or lowered as the case may be. The water of the river is colored by the geological strata

it has passed through, the vegetation that it has supported, or the refuse that has been shot into it. The molecules leaving an alcoholic victim are in a very much lower condition than those from a pure, self-controlled person. The impress the molecules receive does not pass off quickly, and in fact, as like attracts like, the grosser ones are continually finding their way into the bodies of the more coarsely minded people and helping to keep them back; the more refined and spiritually impressed particles cannot be retained except by those persons with whom they are harmonious. From the standpoint of universal Brotherhood this fact impresses upon us the importance of pure thought and clean living; it shows that the Theosophic teaching of the unity of the race on every plane has a scientific basis. None of us can escape the influence of the rest, and no one is without the power of helping or degrading his fellows, consciously or otherwise, not only by his actions and his thoughts, but by the very complexion he gives to the atoms of his body.



## THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ASTRAL FORM

As the mortal frame begins to decompose in the grave, or better still, in the reverent and sanitary flame of the crematorium, the "Astral Body" is released. The astral body is practically a second human form, mortal and perishable, a semi-material mold holding the particles of the physical body in their places; it is the ethereal matrix of the molecules, the Double or the *Eidolon* of the Greeks. It changes little during life, after the body reaches maturity; differing in that respect greatly from the physical body, but after death it immediately begins to dissolve into its own grade of matter. It is not spiritual at all, and it has no proper consciousness of its own; it has little to do with the progress of the soul, unless it is "artificially stimulated" or vivified, when it normally becomes a hindrance. As a rule, it fades out like a smoke-ring from a pipe, which has a definite form for a while. Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the eminent biologist, was surprised

to find the great tensile strength of this principle during some experiments he once made with a medium. The astral double has occasionally been seen by sensitive persons near graves, for it cannot get far away from the body, and many ghost stories have probably originated from this. After the complete destruction of the physical body the astral form entirely disappears, and cremation has great power in breaking it up rapidly.

Now we are coming to one of those teachings of Theosophy which, though eminently reasonable in themselves, and perfectly in harmony with our highest intuitions and strongest common sense, require a complete change from the ordinary theological method of considering the things of the inner world, or from the materialistic notions we have in so many cases consciously or unconsciously imbibed from the atmosphere of doubt and sarcasm and controversy regarding the existence of the soul which is so prevalent today.

## IV

### THE "SECOND DEATH"

**T**HEOSOPHY teaches that the death of the body is not the only great change that occurs at the close of life; there is a "second death," a death of the lower passion-al nature, the *Kâma-rûpa* or Body of Desire. This mystic death sets free the higher principles, which then rise to sublime heights of spiritual existence, from whence they do not return until the next incarnation.

To understand this more clearly we must regard the Higher Ego or Manas as the center of *self*-consciousness, overshadowed by the potentiality of *Âtmâ-Buddhi*, but during life partly incarnated in this molecular existence, where for experience and for the elevation of lower states of being, it has identified itself in that limited bodily condition where passion and desire have great power. The Lower

Manas is an Emanation, a portion sent out from the Higher Ego; we may call it for convenience the reflection or the Shadow; and, while in the body, it becomes fully identified with terrestrial existence, after the first few years of life, when, as Wordsworth says:

Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
He sees it in his joy;  
The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

It has forgotten "heaven which is its home." The "false personality," the compound of the Lower Manas — this Emanation of the Higher — the passions, and a number of sensory impressions derived from a long train of daily experiences strung together by the thread of physical memory, is what we call our personal self; Mr.—, or Mrs.— as the case may be; but all the time the

real Reincarnating Ego, the higher "Individuality," is behind, watching, guiding, and helping, whenever the lower self will allow its voice — the Conscience — to be heard. It is the "Guardian Angel."

At death, the body, the astral, and the physical vitality or Prâna, return to their own molecular or atomic states, and for the present we need say no more about them; the inner man now stands freed from his physical sheath, but he is none the less a personality; he is still entangled in those passions he has been weaving around himself since infancy. He is now on the *Kâma-loka* plane, the natural home of desire and passion. The *perfectly legitimate normal* existence of other states of being, "beyond and within" the ordinary terrestrial plane, blending into and interpenetrating it, is a conception beginners in Theosophy find difficult to realize in some cases. Even the lowest of these planes are invisible to our embodied senses except under very unusual circumstances, and though they shade into each other like the colors of the

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spectrum, each one is distinct and characterized by a dominant state of consciousness.

Most people are in the habit of thinking of everything on terrestrial lines, of supposing that the higher as well as the lower feelings disappear utterly with the destruction of the brain, or else of putting the whole question aside as a hopeless mystery. But to see the truth the student must look upon the things of the mind and the soul from higher ground. Reasoning which does fairly well for the things of the body and the mechanical forces will not apply to super-mundane conditions without modification. So when we speak of the plane of passion and desire whereon a being may live, we must not look upon it as if it were another material planet like ours, but rather as a subtle condition of matter, within, or interpenetrating our world; the Kâma-lokic condition of consciousness partly resembles the state the mind is in when dreaming an ordinary dream. Even this comparison is very incomplete, for most of our dreaming is done through the brain cells. Speaking

of Kâma-loka, H. P. Blavatsky says that it is the semi-material plane, to us subjective and invisible, where the disembodied "personalities," the astral forms, called Kâma-rûpa, remain, until they fade out from it by the complete exhaustion of the effect of the mental impulses that created these *eidolons* of human and animal passions and desires.

H. P. Blavatsky here uses the words *astral* and *eidolon* for a much more subtle and ether-eal principle, so to speak, than that almost physical astral which perishes as the body decays. The *Kâma-rûpa* is the subjective being; (subjective from our terrestrially objective position but objective enough on its own plane) composed of the whole of the passional nature of the man that was; and for a while the Higher Ego cannot withdraw the Shadow, the Emanation or lower Manas which has gotten entangled in it. In some cases the lower consciousness absolutely dominates the position and the Higher Ego is compelled to break off from its Shadow. This terrible fate for the lower Manas even happens occasionally during life, and then we see the awful

spectacle of a seemingly human being entirely destitute of conscience—a soulless being—although often highly intellectual. The Kâma-lokic plane has many divisions, each one in harmony with the grade of materiality of the being passing through it. In the Egyptian "Book of the Dead" they are symbolized by the many portals the soul has to pass through before being finally allowed to enter the Elysian fields of Aanroo. At each gateway he has to give the password, showing advance in spirituality and purification.

As the departed soul progresses in purification it approaches nearer and nearer the Father in Heaven, the Higher Ego, and at the same time the Kâma principle fades away, only leaving behind it the seeds of future action, the seeds that have been sown in the life just passed and which have to come to fruiting in some later incarnation. Nothing but the highest thoughts and feelings of the past life can enter into the final state of heavenly bliss, but before this can be attained the gradual change called the Second Death has to be faced.



The *general* Theosophical teaching of the second death is nothing new, and, being a fact in the orderly progress of the soul, the most enlightened of the ancient philosophers knew of it and have handed it down to us, who have greater difficulties in investigating for ourselves. The sacred Knowledge of the mysteries of death cannot be found by the invocation of the fading Kâma-rûpic shades of the dead in séance rooms or by any ordinary means known to science. Penetration behind the veil of illusion that wraps us so closely can only be done with faultless vision by those who have passed entirely beyond the entanglements of selfish desire. Only those Masters of Wisdom who have attained perfect Compassion, the "perfect love that casteth out fear," can venture into and return safely from those regions "from whose bourn no [uninitiated, or untrained] traveler returns." The visions of such imperfect seers as Swedenborg, Scipio Africanus, St. Theresa, and the like are often quite unreliable, for they are colored by preconceptions arising from their

own particular school of theology acting through self-hypnosis, as well as by gigantic personal limitations. Plutarch puts the ancient Theosophic teaching very clearly, though of course, he could not explain anything fully because the whole detail belonged to the inner Mysteries. He says:

Now of the deaths we die, the one makes man two out of three and the other one of (out of) two. The former is in the region and jurisdiction of Demeter, whence the name given to the Mysteries, *τελείν*, resembles that given to death, *τελευτάν*. The Athenians also heretofore called the deceased sacred to Demeter. As for the other death, it is in the moon or the region of Persephone. . . . And as with the one, the terrestrial, so with the other celestial Hermes doth dwell. This suddenly and with violence plucks the soul from the body; but Proserpina mildly and in a long time disjoins the understanding from the soul.\* Now both the one and the other happen according to nature. It is or-

\*Proserpina, or Persephone, stands here for post-mortem Karma, which is said to regulate the separation of the lower from the higher "principles"—the *soul*, as *Nephesh*, the breath of animal life, which remains for a time in Kâma-loka, from the higher compound *Ego*, which goes into the state of Devachan, or bliss.

daigned by Fate [Fatum or Karma] that every soul, whether with or without understanding [mind] when gone out of the body should wander for a time, though not all for the same, in the region lying between the earth and moon [Kâma-loka]. For those that have been unjust and dissolute suffer then the punishment due to their offences; but the good and virtuous are then detained till they are purified, and have, by expiation, purged out of them all the infections they might have contracted from the contagion of the body, as if from foul health, living in the mildest part of the air, called the Meadows of Hades, where they must remain for a certain prefixed and appointed time. And then, as if they were returning from a wondering pilgrimage or long exile into their country, they have a taste of joy, . . . etc.

#### CONSCIOUSNESS AND PERSONALITY

BEFORE passing on to the consideration of the region of Paradise where the Higher Manas and the spiritual aroma of the lower Manas become one and unite with the Higher *Self*, it will be well to take another glance at the question of reflected or emanated intelligence, the greatest stumbling-block to beginners. The superficial materialism of

this age, not only the theoretical disbelief in the existence of immortality, but the modern ideals of practical life, have brought so many millions into such a settled way of thinking of themselves as nothing but this body and brain-mind, that it requires some exercise of will to break up the hypnotic illusion and to see things in a larger way and with a broader view. But when this is done, what a relief to find it is not necessary to believe, as the theologians have indoctrinated us in their ignorance, that our present limited personalities will continue to exist in Heaven or Hell throughout all Eternity; nor to have to take refuge in a natural, instinctive horror of that wearisome belief — in the melancholy hope of annihilation!

All things possess self-consciousness in potentiality; every atom on each plane of being has it in latency if not in action, and the principles that the Ego builds round itself in order to come into touch with the many phases of earth-life receive a partial awakening from its contact. Think of a light shin-

ing through differently colored panes of glass, some of which remain phosphorescent for a while after the withdrawal of the inner light, a physical fact which partly illustrates the super-physical condition of the lower states of consciousness when the Higher Ego has passed on. The whole of Nature is ready at the first favorable moment to acquire self-conscious existence; the greater object which man is struggling to reach (and all things are tending to become man on their way upward) is to "enjoy the Glory of God," in the language of the theologians. We would prefer to put it — *That all things should become aware of the plan of the Divine Oversoul of which they are expressions.* Observe that the word God is not used in Theosophy with any "personal" signification — unless the ordinary, limited meaning of the word "personal" is set aside — as so many theologians try to do by their desperate attempts to combine the incompatible, in their efforts to define "the Nature of God." By this almost creative power of a higher consciousness to light

the fires in less evolved substance, the illusion is produced in the mind that it can divide and subdivide itself; but actually the original consciousness must remain a unity and does not lose its identity. The basis in which it works will change, or more exactly, it will pass through many fundamentally distinct states, but once having arrived at that feeling, the sense of I-am-I exists through all the changes of form and growth during earth-life. Even during the states of so-called unconsciousness (unconsciousness to the waking mind, such as when the brain is under the effect of hypnotism) there is no real blank, for when the subject is again hypnotized the lost memory of what has taken place during the hypnotic state returns and can even be made permanent. Even the character of the personality may change, but the "Spectator," the inner Man "for whom the hour shall never strike," looks on and recognizes the changes and profits by the experience gained through the lower self. Back of all there is That which is still more spiritual than

the Higher Ego: the Higher SELF — the Divine Breath, *Buddhi* illuminated by *Âtmâ*, That which is ONE, the Oversoul.

"Lift thy head, O Lanoo; dost thou see one, or countless lights above thee, burning in the dark midnight sky?"

"I sense one Flame, oh Gurudeva, I see countless undetached sparks shining in it."

"Thou sayest well. And now look around and into thyself. That light which burns inside thee, dost thou find it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brother-men?"

"It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, 'Thy Soul and My Soul.'" — From an Eastern esoteric Catechism, quoted by H. P. Blavatsky.

Now we have traveled in our imaginary journey a long way with the advancing soul, and though many mysteries have been left yet unexplained by the Teachers of Theosophy, and many gaps remain to be filled as the student makes progress in impersonality, still the broad outlines of the coherent system that has been given us are now apparent.

## V

### DEVACHAN

**W**ITH the disappearance of the Kâma principle, the radiant glories of the Heavenly World open on the purified soul, now freed from the taint of everything that held it from the realization of the Christos, the true Vine, of which it is but one branch. As a tree puts forth twigs and leaves, withdrawing into itself by degrees the virtue it has gained through the existence of the leaves, now mere skeletons, so the higher has withdrawn all that was useful, noble, and of good report from the terrestrial. The state of "Devachan" has now been fully entered upon, the final state preceding the next plunge or rebirth into earth-life for further development.

As this Manual is concerned only with the broader aspects of Man after Death, we



must leave for separate treatment the consideration of many undesirable hindrances that interfere with the orderly progress of certain souls in passing through the planes of Kâmaloka and disengaging themselves from the stains of passion. These hindrances are caused by an overmastering desire for the pleasures of the senses enjoyed during life, by such events as suicide and accidental death, or by the efforts of misguided people to get into communication with the departed, through the necromantic practices of mediumship.

To get an approximate idea of Devachan, the highest state between earthly incarnations, we must not allow ourselves to dwell too much on form. No doubt it is difficult for our brain-minds to separate the idea of conscious existence from definite form of some kind; probably the easiest way to open the intuitive faculty in this direction is to meditate on — and then act out — such attributes of the divine nature as Justice, Mercy, Love, and Compassion. These are as actual as anything else we contact; nay, they and their like are the only ac-

tualities, for they are changeless and everlasting; but they are *formless*, they can not be laid out on the dissecting table or analysed with spectroscopes! They are the Eternal Verities shining behind the veil of illusion created by the Spirit of the Universe to manifest them. It is impossible to put these high and sacred matters into words to be understood by the brain-mind in its ordinary condition, for the mind partakes too much of the nature of matter itself to do more than grasp faint glimpses of what is meant by spirit. The caricatures the laboring minds of men have drawn in their futile efforts to explain the meaning of spirituality have disgusted many thoughtful seekers who were just turning towards the light, and have sent them back to materialism as a lesser evil than superstition. Attempting to explain spiritual consciousness to one who has no glimmering of intuition is like discussing the colors of the rainbow with a blind man.

But Theosophy does not leave anyone without hope. It teaches that if even the least effort is made to break away from the clogging

things of personal selfishness, a little spiritual knowledge will come, and that if the struggle is continued without slackening, the light will get brighter until the full daylight of what is called in the East "Nirvâna," and in the Christian mysticism the "Beatific Vision," will flood the soul. The heat of aspiration transmutes the lead of the lower nature to the Gold. Spiritual fire begins to work the instant a high aspiration is entertained.

But Devachan is not this state of perfect knowledge and wisdom; it is a high and exquisitely refined condition, but even in its purity the soul is bound to a certain extent by illusion. Although Devachan is nearer the One Reality than the physical plane, it is not that divine region where all things are plain to the view of the illuminated Seer and are known in their *real* essence. We have not yet gained our freedom, for the life-cycle of humanity is only partially completed and ages must elapse before perfect liberation is achieved by the race as a whole.

In the Theosophical teaching of Devachan

an entirely new conception of life after death has been offered to the western world. A dismal materialism has woefully misunderstood the meaning of our environment; it can see nothing but that Nature is "red in tooth and claw," and thinks that with the disappearance of the brain, annihilation is the end of consciousness; while the vague and inconsistent ideas of Heaven and Hell of the ecclesiastics, or the "Summerland" of the spiritists, are the only alternatives. No wonder there is so much negation and rejection of all but what pertains to the life of the senses; no wonder that the highest ideal of large masses of the people is that "Honesty is the best Policy."

But Theosophy shows that between the extremes of denial and credulity the truth is to be looked for. Neither will the Intelligence of man sink into the abyss of nothingness, its existence having been to no purpose; nor will the narrow brain-mind of Mr A. or Mrs. B. drag on a wearisome career in eternity cramped by the limitations of personality as

we know them. No indeed; in the Theosophical teaching of the existence of a Devachanic interlude between incarnations on earth, an entirely new conception of the greatness of life and the object of death has been projected into the western world. Once we realize that the real Man is a part of the Oversoul; is immortal in past and future; that he has to understand the various planes of existence in this illimitable universe by embodiment in forms of differing degrees of materiality; that for the Inner Man there is no alarming shock at death flinging him into painfully new conditions—once we grasp these sublime conditions we shall comprehend the mercy of the Higher Law in a new way. The Theosophist rejoices in the knowledge that Devachan is at least a partial release from the bonds of personality, a perfect rest for the soul after the strife of earth-life, when it assimilates the worthiest experiences of the past, and gains strength for the next battle. William Q. Judge puts the case tersely:

Nature, always kind, leads us soon again to heaven for a rest, for the flowering of the best or highest in our natures.

In Devachan, the Imagination, one of the highest faculties we have, is given full play. This godlike creative power, the inspiration of the artist, the musician, or the inventor, has for its materials experiences of the past life, memories of antecedent states, unknown to the brain-mind of the previous incarnation, as well as knowledge of things entirely veiled from us by the limitations of the senses. Who knows what creations of poetry or of invention have not been worked out in Devachan, which afterwards seemed to shoot into the brain of the personality in his next incarnation? The following arrangement will help the student to understand something of the changes produced by the journey through the portals of death. This classification is not set forth as the authoritative teaching of Theosophy, but is the writer's deduction from the little that the Teachers have given out about the changes of consciousness after death.

## MORTAL MAN

## IN TERRESTRIAL LIFE.

The *Feeling* of "*I-am-I*" and no other, the Self-consciousness, permeating the whole man, but mainly centered in the Lower Manas and the Brain-mind.

*Imagination*, weak in most cases; great geniuses possible exceptions.

*Reason* strong; the principal faculty in action. Uses the brain and is mainly stimulated from the out-

## MAN AFTER DEATH.

The same *Feeling* of "*I-am-I*," but at first chiefly concentrated in the lower Kâma-Manasic *passional* principles. Afterwards centered in the Higher Manas and illuminated by *Buddhi* after the "second death" — when the withdrawal into the Devachanic state takes place.

## LATER, IN DEVACHAN.

*Imagination* strong and active—the principal faculty working.

*Reason* in abeyance as a rule; when it is active it uses internal or subjective stimuli from higher planes.

side; rare flashes come from a higher source for it to work out.

The *Emotions* of the Passional nature, usually physically dominated and self-centered.

Lower animal *Desires*, and intense Desire for Sensuous existence. (Suicides are seeking happier conditions — not extinction.)

Brain-memory of events of the present incarnation: materials for reasoning and, in a small degree, for the imagination to use.

The higher *Unselfish Emotions* and *Heart* feelings.

"*Tanhâ*," the Desire for Sensuous Life latent in Devachan at first, but grows steadily stronger as the karmic time for reincarnation approaches, and the forces keeping the soul in the Devachanic state are becoming exhausted.

Memory of the permanently valuable spiritual thoughts and deeds: materials for the imagination to work with.



## THE "PRINCIPLES"

## IN LIFE

The whole of the  
"Seven Principles."

## AFTER DEATH

The Astral body for a short time; the Lower Manas entangled with the passional nature, forming Kâmarûpa; afterwards the Higher Ego, or Reincarnating Ego, united with the spiritual part of the lower Manas or Shadow and illuminated by the overshadowing Light of Buddhi and Âtmâ; the "Skandhas," or seeds of the actions performed in the past life, ready to be vivified under favoring circumstances in the next life.

## VI

### THE PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT INCARNATION

**I**N Devachan the higher energies or causes set in motion in earth-life are carried to their completion. The very nature of the Manasic principle requires the time and peaceful conditions provided in Devachan to work out the effects of what it has stored. While in a body these higher fruitions cannot manifest themselves, for the environment and structure of the brain are too material. In Devachan the Higher Ego, overshadowed by *Buddhi* — the *Buddhi-Manas* — by the assimilation of the Lower Manasic Personal ideations and such consciousness of the better things like compassion, patience, the higher side of Art and Music, ideals of service for humanity — draws up the enduring part of the Personality that was, to itself. The Higher Ego is the

bearer of all the "alter egos" threaded on its silver line of successive incarnations, which blend into one at last; but in the Devachan immediately succeeding any one life, the spiritual "aroma" of the events of that particular lifetime is what colors it with the greatest distinctness. Personal immortality for the "alter ego" is so far conditional that it depends upon the quality of its aspirations to make its union with the Father, the True Vine, possible. Like to like is the rule in all worlds, and the law of least resistance bears sway everywhere; it would be obviously as preposterous to imagine an utter sensualist in the higher and more refined degrees of Kâmaloka or (until purged) on the spiritual plane of Devachan, as to expect a cannibal savage to enjoy a classical concert.

The descent of the Higher Ego through its Shadow is symbolized in the Christian story by the incarnation of the Christos in Jesus of Nazareth and his subsequent ascent to his Father, after being crucified on the Cross of Matter. The penitent thief stands for the

higher aspiration of the past life, as he is promised Paradise with the Christos, but not so the other who represents the unredeemable passions which go to the pit.

The Ego in Devachan, now a Trinity in unity, is not omniscient, nor free from illusion; it has ages of necessary experience to go through first. We ought really to regard Devachan from the standpoint of the Lower Manas, or more properly, and more correctly, from the standpoint of the Bridge, or "*Antaskârana*," the part of the Higher Ego that has been the connecting link between the two Manases in life, and which now bears all that essence of the late personality which can be united with its Father in Heaven. From this position, looking *up*, the mystic union with the Higher Ego in Devachan will be, to the purified *Antaskârana* — all that we can recognize as worth preserving of the Personality — a tremendous increase of Life and Light, of Glory, of Bliss beyond anything in our most exquisite dreams. The Imagination comes into action with a thousandfold the power it

ever had before, and the rich and satisfying Dream, which is more than a Dream, abundantly rewards the Pilgrim for those distressing events on earth for which it may not have been responsible *in that particular incarnation* and which had left a sense of injustice.

Although Devachan is much nearer the reality of things than any ordinary dream, yet it is sufficiently illusory for the soul to be able to build up its castles in the air without fear of disturbance by anything outside. It is surrounded in imagination by friends, relatives, and all it held dear; as the creative imagination builds exactly what it desires so vividly as to appear more real than the most intense experiences while embodied, every one gets precisely what is to him the highest joy. The soul in the Devachanic state is, in fact, practically in that wondrous condition of rapture that the Poet or the Musician or even perhaps the Mathematician enjoy when absorbed in their highest creative states, states in which the body, the earth, and all other persons absolutely cease to exist for the time.

The actor [in Devachan] is so imbued with the rôle just played by him that he dreams of it during the whole Devachanic night, which vision continues till the hour strikes for him to return to the stage of life to enact another part. — (*Key to Theosophy*)

Glorious as the state of Devachan is, *it is not equal in importance to the condition of earth-life*. Necessary it is, joyous exceedingly, but it is on earth that Liberation from the chains of illusion and passion has to be gained. Here, where the whole nature of man is crying to be used wisely, is the real school, here it is that the Perfected Man must arise. When this is done the time spent in the spiritual state of Devachan will be unnecessary; that condition is now needed by the soul for recuperation, for without it the strain of earthly existence could not be endured; but when the whole nature has been purified in the fires of trial, and absolute impersonality is gained, the Divine Man will be as one of the Gods and will in his turn become a fully conscious Creator and Guide to the unprogressed beings below him on the upward march.

## VII

### THE INDIVIDUALITY AND ITS IMPERSONATIONS

**T**HEOSOPHY urges upon students to make the greatest distinction in their own minds between the Immortal Individuality, the divine Christos, called in the East "the *Íśvara* that dwelleth in the heart of every creature," and the fleeting personality. Man in his ordinary state believes that he is nothing more than the lower mind. Even the greatest intellectual thinkers of the age do not dare to break through this hypnotic veil, well symbolized by the teaching of the creeds that men are "miserable sinners," a depressing nightmare; or the similarly depraving notion that a man is no more than "a monkey shaved," of the biologists. Theosophy recognizes the backward state of mankind to the full and makes no attempt to flatter his vanity with false

praise; but it gives him hope, and by showing him that there is the Higher Ego overshadowing his personality, that it is ever trying to call his attention to those things which are pure and of good report, and that he can enter into the Mansion that is waiting for him if he will only try the right means, it destroys the fear of death.

In gaining the Real Life of the soul, of which the Devachanic interlude is a pale reflection, we really shall not be gaining any *new thing*; if we go about it rightly we find that we have but to remove the obstructions that are in the path, most of which we have built up for ourselves. If we give up the lower desires and turn our energies to those which are in harmony with the highest aspirations of the race we at once find ourselves partaking of a larger consciousness; we begin to hear the mysterious whisper in the heart — the voice of the greater humanity of which we are all a part, but of which, alas! we are so little aware. Without going more deeply into metaphysics here, it suffices for practical purposes that as



we remove the obstructions, the glories of real life and the existence of the true Self break in upon us. This is the only way to triumph over death. All the greatest teachers of the ages have brought the same message, but the Teachers of Theosophy in this age have shown how to train the young by the Râja Yoga system in such a perfect balance of the faculties and joyous self-control that they will be able to say fearlessly, "Death where is thy sting?"

The terrestrial body is not the only River of Lethe, plunged into which, as Plotinus says, the soul forgets all, but Devachan partakes of the same nature, for in that blissful state the celestial body with which the soul is united causes it to lose sight utterly of the painful events and thoughts of the past life. Although the real cause of Devachan is ignorance of the Higher Ego, yet in our present state of evolution it is a necessary and desirable experience; we see how necessary by the very fact — a profound mystery to physiology — that to keep going and preserve sanity the Higher Ego has to abandon its communication with the body

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for a large part of each twenty-four hours. The Higher Ego never entirely quits the spiritual realms, and although the materials used by the imagination in Devachan with which to build its ideal life are only derived from the most sublimated thoughts and acts of the past incarnation, yet the totality of events of that and all the previous lives is indelibly recorded so that when real Self-knowledge arrives the veil will fall and access be gained to the records, and the course of evolution be plainly seen. We are taught that the soul is able to look back with purified sight a little way into the past as it re-enters earth-life. It then sees the causes that have led it irresistibly to the new incarnation, good or bad, and recognizes the justice of the Law of Karma; it takes up the cross again with willingness.

"Devachan is a spiritual gestation within an ideal matrix state,"\* and as we emerge from it into the light of earthly day, complete in all our potentialities for good or evil, we again have the opportunity of keeping the simplicity

\* *H. P. Blavatsky.*

of the spiritual life. Of all the poets, Wordsworth has given us in his *Intimations of Immortality* the most inspired vision of pre-existence in the Devachanic state. In the haunting sweetness of his word-picture we catch evanescent glimpses of that which we have lost:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close . . .

And this:

Hence, in a season of calm weather  
Though inland far we be,  
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither;  
Can in a moment travel thither—  
And see the children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Some have been fortunate enough to retain the "vision splendid" longer than others; *some have revived it*, after recollecting how they once lost it in early childhood; pity those who never had it, to whom everything is commonplace and drab. They have been the materialistically minded, worldly-wise folk who have not sown any seeds in their past life for the reaping in Devachan, and have therefore passed the time while waiting for a suitable incarnation in a semi-torpid state. They may even have reincarnated immediately, without any Devachanic break.

The subject of Necromancy, the attempt to raise the shades of the dead, must be treated in another Manual; it is merely necessary to mention here that the purified soul in Devachan does not respond to artificial means taken to revivify the *astral shell* (the residue of the Kâma-rûpa) with a factitious vitality derived chiefly from the medium and the sitters in the séance-room. But though the soul in Devachan is so far removed from the physical plane, and so fully occupied with the wondrous

inner experiences for which it needs to be temporarily sequestered, that it can not return to earth — in the true sense of the word it has not lost touch completely with the loved ones left behind. A mother's love is a protecting shield for her children long after she has passed away, though she does not have the pain of seeing them suffer the vicissitudes of life. And at times of great spiritual exaltation a person on earth may sense the bliss of the one in Devachan; but we are taught that this is of very rare occurrence, and is poles asunder from the alleged return of the souls of the dead in the séance-room — apparitions which, *when genuine*, are almost invariably caused by the astral body of the medium or the shell of the deceased, the *Kāma-rūpa*, or something else which is not the *real man* — by which we mean, of course, the Higher and Lower Manas, united at last.

The length of time spent in Devachan is a question of difficulty; little direct information has been given on that point, but a general average is said to be about fifteen hundred

years. In the case of persons having led an ordinary creditable life and having a fairly large store of lofty experiences to be assimilated, the time will be much longer than in the case of those who have pursued none but ignoble aims, or materialists who utterly deny the possibility of any existence but the physical. The latter will return to earth very soon. A study of the cyclic periods of history gives some light on the subject; it is seen that there is a distinct tendency for the repetition of similar events in a period of between twelve hundred and two thousand years; witness the Renaissance of Art in the fourteenth and later centuries, which followed about 1600 years after the great period of Art in Greece. But we have not yet sufficient historical data to be able to follow out this line of research in detail, though as new discoveries are constantly being made, future historians will find this a profitable study, clearing up many otherwise inexplicable difficulties.

The question of the existence of heaven or hell presents no great difficulties to the Theo-

sophical student. Hell is mainly here on earth, where we have made the horrible conditions of existence for ourselves; after death there is a period of purification in which many earth-bound souls must necessarily have suffering. Heaven is the long blissful ecstasy of Devachan, terminating in the awakening to earth-life in a new personality, formed by the just law of Karma from the seeds of action, the Skandhas, carried on as seeds by the Immortal Reincarnating Ego after the break-up of the Kâma-rûpa, and in which we have a fresh chance of undoing the mistakes of the past and gaining that real spirituality rendering the semi-illusions of Devachan, lofty as they are, unnecessary. The two procedures of purification on earth through lives of effort and the trials for entrance into Devachan have close points of resemblance, and were condensed into one in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," and *Job*. H. P. Blavatsky tells us:

During the sacred Mysteries the candidate for Initiation enacted the whole drama of death and the resurrection as a glorified spirit.

Though we may have lost the key to the pro-founder teachings of the Egyptian and Greek Mysteries, we have not lost the key to the only method of regaining our high estate. William Q. Judge, the second Leader of the Theosophical Movement, to whose teachings we are indebted for much of our information concerning Devachan, in pointing the way to reach the Higher Ego, the "Warrior," says:

It is selflessness, unselfishness, altruism, pure love of the light for its own sake, not for what it will confer—these things bring the candidate face to face with the "Warrior."

Katherine Tingley is teaching the people to discover and make manifest that "You have within you the ceaseless flow of living Fire." She has further said the following:

According to my knowledge, when a soul is leaving its earthly Temple, however dark and gruesome the circumstances may be, it knows its own path. So in moving out of the body, long before the pulse has ceased to beat or the breath is stilled, it finds itself born into a New Life, an unspeakable joy. Something new has been fashioned for that soul in



that sacred moment, and then it comprehends the enormity of its mistakes and wills itself to higher things in the next life. There are different experiences for different souls according to their evolution, but at last each one rests in the arms of the beneficent Law, free from the limitations of earthly life. The ordinary mind cannot fully conceive what has happened; the soul is judged by the Law, not by any man, and when it is reborn it not only takes with it the experience of the past, though without the memory of details, but it takes something else that has happened at that wonderful time when it is born into the New Life, when it is reborn in more ways than one.

*There is No Religion Higher than Truth*

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## **The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society**

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*Established for the benefit of the people of the earth & all creatures*

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### **OBJECTS**

This BROTHERHOOD is part of a great and universal movement which has been active in all ages.

This Organization declares that Brotherhood is a fact in Nature. Its principal purpose is to teach Brotherhood, demonstrate that it is a fact in nature and make it a living power in the life of humanity.

Its subsidiary purpose is to study ancient and modern religions, science, philosophy and art; to investigate the laws of nature and the divine powers in man.

\*

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\*

THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, founded by H. P. Blavatsky at New York, 1875, continued after her death under the leadership of the co-founder, William Q. Judge, and now under the leadership of their successor, Katherine Tingley, has its Headquarters at the International Theosophical Center, Point Loma, California.

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**THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY** welcomes to membership all who truly love their fellow men and desire the eradication of the evils caused by the barriers of race, creed, caste or color, which have so long impeded human progress; to all sincere lovers of truth and to all who aspire to higher and better things than the mere pleasures and interests of a worldly life, and are prepared to do all in their power to make Brotherhood a living energy in the life of humanity, its various departments offer unlimited opportunities.

The whole work of the Organization is under the direction of the Leader and Official Head, Katherine Tingley, as outlined in the Constitution.

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Do not fail to profit by the following:

It is a regrettable fact that many people use the name of Theosophy and of our Organization for self-interest, as also that of H. P. Blavatsky, the Foundress, to attract attention to themselves and to gain public support. This they do in private and public speech and in publications, also by lecturing throughout the country. Without being in any way connected with the **UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**, in many cases they permit it to be inferred that they are, thus misleading the public, and many honest inquirers are hence led away from the truths of Theosophy as presented by H. P. Blavatsky and her successors, William Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley, and practically exemplified in their Theosophical work for the uplifting of humanity.

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**Founded in 1897 by Katherine Tingley**

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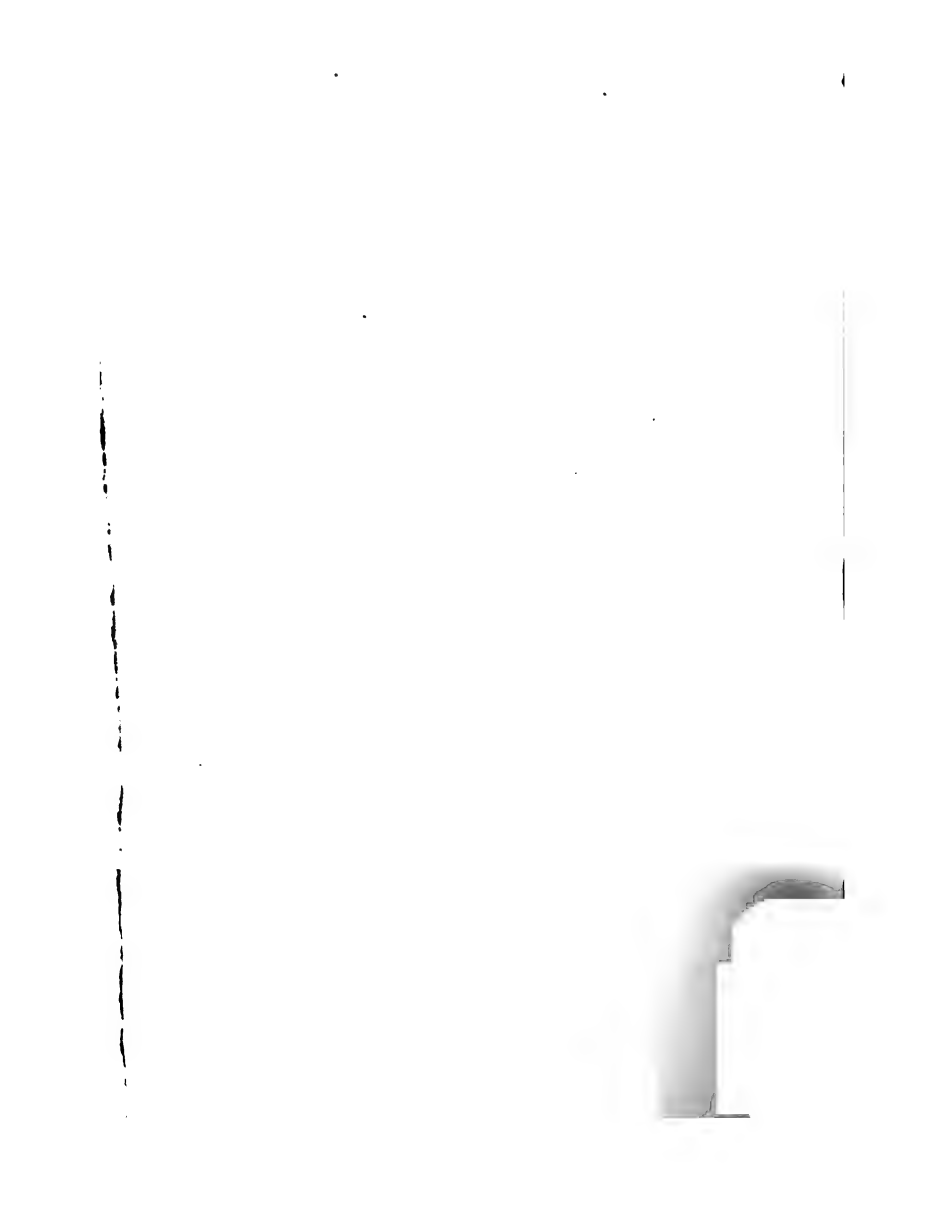
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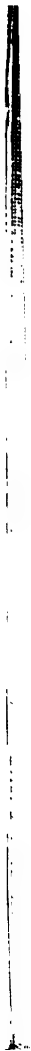
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